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from his friend
Wm Davis

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AN

ANNIVERSARY SERMON,

PREACHED

AT PLIMOUTH, DECEMBER 22, 1801.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT

PLIMOUTH,

DECEMBER 22, 1801,

COMMEMORATIVE

OF THE

PIOUS ANCESTRY,

WHO FIRST IMIGRATED TO THAT PLACE, 1620.

BY

JOHN ALLYN, S. H. M.
Paſtor at DUXBORO'.

"And the woman fled into the wilderneſs where ſhe had a "a place prepared of God." *Rev.* xii. 6.

"The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied "and grew." *Ex.* i. 12.

"Surely there is no enchantment againſt Jacob, neither is "there any divination againſt Iſrael." *Num.* xxiii. 23.

BOSTON: PRINTED BY

Munroe & Francis,

Half-Court Square, back of the Post-Office.—1802.

HEBREWS xii. 2.

——BY IT THE ELDERS OBTAINED A GOOD REPORT.

THE ELDERS alluded to in the text were the Fathers of the antediluvian age,—the progenitors and princes of the nation of Iſrael. Their names, with ſketches of their hiſtory, are furniſhed in the chapter of the text.

IT is the *point* of the ſacred writer's diſcourſe in this chapter, to ſhew the *foundation* of that celebrity which theſe *elders* gained in the world,—by *what means* "they obtained a good report." *This was* FAITH. By the vigorous and ardent exerciſes of *faith* the *elders* "ſubdued kingdoms, wrought righteouſ-"neſs, obtained promiſes," and thus eſtabliſhed an honourable diſcrimination of character with their cotemporaries, and with poſterity.

THE context furniſhes an hiſtorical illuſtration of religious *faith* which may be contemplated with pious effect by the chriſtian, and if weighed with attention prove "profitable for inſtruction and cor-"rection" to thoſe who are addicted to controverſy about this *religious* exerciſe. By the example of Noah

Noah we are inſtructed that divine faith implies a moſt heedful attention to the warnings of GOD.— "*By faith* he being *warned* of God of things not "ſeen as yet, moved with fear prepared an ark to "the ſaving of his houſe. The example of Abraham enforces the obligation of an *unheſitating* compliance with the commands of heaven. "By faith "Abraham when he was called to go out into a "place which he ſhould after receive for an inherit-"ance obeyed." Alſo, "By faith Abraham when "he was tried, offered up Iſaac." The hiſtory of Iſaac and Jacob illuſtrates the duty of unſhaken reliance on the divine promiſes. "By faith Iſaac bleſſ-"ed Jacob and Eſau concerning things to come. "By faith Jacob when he was dying, bleſſed both "the ſons of Joſeph." Another quality of faith appears in the character of Moſes. "By faith Moſes "when he was come to years, refuſed to be called "the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter; chooſing rather "to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to "enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon."——The other illuſtrations of faith contained in the chapter of the text are highly inſtructive, and merit the moſt ſerious regard of all who are ſolicitous to frame their principles, to order their conduct by the ſtandard of divine revelation.

Is it degrading to the elders of ſacred hiſtory, or *is it exalting too much the Fathers of New-England, to compare them together?* Whatever unlikeneſs there may be in circumſtances of hiſtory, or minute features of character, connected with the age and ſtate of ſociety

ety in which they reſpectively lived, a reſemblance in this point will be confeſſed by all—"Through "faith they obtained a good report." Though living in ages remote, and countries diſtant, the fathers eulogized in the chapter of the text, and the worthies brought to our recollection by this day and occaſion, attract conſideration on the ſame account. The *former* did obtain, and the latter deſerve *a good report* on account of the conquering influences of FAITH,—conquering the temptations of the world, and ſupporting them under every afflictive trial.

VARIOUS, and diverſe are the ſources of reputation. The page of hiſtory gives the knowledge of ſome who have fought and acquired the fame of military proweſs; who fearleſs of pain or danger have expoſed their lives in the field of battle, and voluntarily met a glorious death in defence of country. Others have ſignalized themſelves by literary acquiſitions. With uncommon vigour and elaſticity of mind they burſted the bands of ignorance—revealed things hidden from the foundation of the world. Others again in ages paſt and preſent have diſtinguiſhed themſelves as Stateſmen. With eyes of diſcernment peculiar to themſelves they have pierced the maſk of intrigue,-----calculated the probable changes in the political world,—framed wiſe meaſures upon the foreſight of national feelings and circumſtances, and thus have gotten a name in the earth.—But the text and this anniverſary lead to a different contemplation: They direct our thoughts to men who have "*ſhone as lights*" in the religious world, who

have

have been diſtinguiſhed by ardent piety ; the objects of whoſe ſupreme love were God, and his worſhip. Men illuſtrious by the purity of their morals, uncorrupted by the moſt deluſive ſnares of vice, ſurmounting formidable dangers and difficulties, in the execution of duty " not counting even their lives dear to " them ſo that they might finiſh their chriſtian courſe " with joy" ; and who thus *obtained a good report.*

It is unneceſſary, in a formal manner, to juſtify the attachment of the character now deſcribed to the *anceſtry* of New-England. Their title to *a good report through faith* is as well eſtabliſhed as that of the ſcripture patriarchs. It is our object in the ſequel of the diſcourſe, upon this intereſting occaſion, to give ſome ſketches of their hiſtory ; ſome ſpecimens of their religious principles ; to diſplay the motives actuating them to conflict with ſo many dangers and labours ; and to diſtinguiſh with juſt encomia their renowned leaders.

In the proſecution of this object it is expected to *perpetuate* the knowledge of things already familiar to the minds of ſome rather than to gratify the antiquarian with new articles of inſtruction. Our diſcourſe may teach the riſing generation, but not thoſe who have attended to the early hiſtory of their country.

The commencement of that hiſtory to be ſketched is ſubſequent to the *reformation.* This reformation which took place in ſeveral parts of Europe in the 15 century was only partial. Indeed to uſe the language of Mr. Robinſon, the paſtor of thoſe who removed from Leyden to this place, " It was not

" poſſible

"poſſible that the chriſtian world ſhould come ſo "lately out of ſuch antichriſtian darkneſs, and that "full perfection of knowledge ſhould brake forth at "once." This *partiality* in reforming is, particularly, manifeſt in the eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of England; and indeed from the preſent ſtate of diſcipline and worſhip in that country. The epiſcopal hierarchy under the firſt proteſtant princes differed little in its oppreſſions from the church of Rome. The *grand* corruptions of popery were purged away:—The doctrinal principles of the reformers were adopted: Yet ſtill they retained many burdenſome and offenſive ceremonies, and particularly the eccleſiaſtic governors were "guilty of being lords over God's heritage, "and not enſamples to the flock." Aſſiſted by the power of the civil magiſtrate, they required under ſevere penalties more uniformity in principles of religious doctrine, and in habits of worſhip, than is poſſible to ſubſiſt among men of different talents and improvements. This requiſition of uniformity gave riſe to a diſſent, and finally to a ſeparation from the epiſcopal church, though it was in many important articles truly proteſtant and reformed.

THE firſt notices of this ſecond reformation occur in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, at the concluſion of the 16th century. The eccleſiaſtical arrangements eſtabliſhed by that Princeſs were diſpleaſing to many of her ſubjects. It was by ſome thought the Engliſh church reſembled in too many points the church of Rome, and they began zealouſly to advocate a more thorough reformation, particularly a *purer* ſtyle of worſhip.

From this circumſtance they were ſtigmatized by their adverſaries with the name of PURITANS. Thoſe in authority were far from being diſpoſed to ſecond their views. Indeed they were ſevere in their meaſures to ſuppreſs the growing hereſy. Had the friends of additional reform been united in ſentiments, principles and manners, hiſtorians obſerve, "it is difficult "to conjecture what would have been the iſſue of "conteſt with the Government." But the fact was, that being compoſed of perſons of different rank, character, opinion and intention, they were unanimous but in one thing, antipathy and oppoſition to the doctrine and diſcipline eſtabliſhed by law. In other reſpects they were diſunited, and hence became ſpeedily ſubdivided into leſſer *ſects*, bearing different names. Of theſe, the moſt famous was formed by Robert Brown. He has been deſcribed as a man of inſinuating manners, but unſteady in his views of men and things. He zealouſly advocated a total ſeparation from the national eſtabliſhment. But his followers not being able to endure the ſeverities brought on them by their violent zeal, and being finally abandoned by their leader, they declined in number and zeal. At this criſis, the more wiſe and moderate among the diſſenters, relaxing from the ſeverity of the opinions and maxims ſupported by Brown, their apoſtate leader, and perceiving his and their own defects, they ſet themſelves with zeal and diligence to correct his ſyſtem, and to form one leſs odious to their adverſaries, and leſs cenſurable in the view of ſober chriſtians. A worthy apoſtle of this new reformation was

John

John Robinſon. The character of this man, eſpecially in later life, appears highly apoſtolic. He has been denominated a ſemi-ſeparatiſt on account of the reluctance he manifeſted in ſeparating from the eſtabliſhed church. "He ſtudied peace and union ſo far as "might agree with faith and a good conſcience. He, "and the church under him, made no ſchiſm or ſepa- "ration from the *reformed churches*, but as occaſion "offered held communion with them." "They pro- "feſſed and deſired to practice a ſeparation from the "world, and the works of the world." It is particularly obſerved by Governor Winſlow, "If any join- "ing to us when we lived at Leyden, or ſince we "came to New England have with the manifeſtation "of their faith and profeſſion of holineſs held forth "therewith ſeparation from the Church of England; "I have diverſe times heard our paſtor ſtop them "forthwith, ſhewing them that we required no ſuch "things at their hands, but only to hold forth faith "in Jeſus Chriſt, holineſs in the fear of God, and "ſubmiſſion to every divine appointment; leaving "the Church of England to themſelves and to the "Lord, to whom we ought to pray to reform what "was amiſs among them."* This teſtimony merits the more attention as it leads us to diſtinguiſh our anceſtors, with their paſtor, from Brown and his particular adherents, and other ſectarian, diſorganizing reformers of the like caſt, who, under pretence of reſtoring a purer faith and worſhip, have only with intemperate zeal "turned things upſide down."

THE

* Prince's New-England Chron. page 88.

THE principles of Mr. Robinſon, from whom we inherit many maxims of order obſerved in our churches, appear to be of a catholic complexion. He was zealous in promoting Reformation, but felt no diſpoſition to pour forth bitter invectives upon churches governed by different rules, or pronounce them unworthy of the chriſtian name. The mildneſs of theſe ſentiments did not however ſecure their worthy advocate, and his followers, from perſecution. The puritans of every claſs were confounded in one maſs, and perſecuted with unrelenting ſeverity. King *James* declared, "*I will have one doctrine and one diſcipline, one religion in ſubſtance and ceremony.*"*

AT the cloſe of the year 1607, "Mr. Robinſons "Church in the north of England, being extremely "haraſſed, ſome caſt into priſon, ſome beſet in their "houſes, ſome forced to leave their farms and fami-"lies, they begin to fly over to Holland for purity of "worſhip and liberty of conſcience."†

BEFORE we purſue this hiſtory any further, let us attend to a ſhort account of thoſe principles, in the ſuppreſſion of which the moſt ſevere meaſures were uſed. The elementary principles of the puritan ſyſtem were theſe, "That the inſpired ſcriptures only "contain the true religion;—that nothing is to be "accounted the proteſtant religion reſpecting either "faith or worſhip but what is taught in them:—that "every man has a right of judging for himſelf, of "trying doctrines by them, and of worſhipping ac-"cording to his apprehenſion of the meaning of them.

"As

* Prince's N. E. Chron. page 9th. † Do. page 23.

"As to faith and the holy ſacraments, the doctrinal "articles of the church of England and of other "reformed churches in Europe were believed to be "agreeable to the Holy Oracles." In matters purely of an eccleſiaſtical nature, they held, "That no par-"ticular church ought to conſiſt of more members "than can conveniently watch over one another, and "uſually meet and worſhip in one congregation :— "That every particular church of Chriſt is only to "conſiſt of ſuch as appear to believe in and obey "him :—That any competent number of ſuch, when "their conſciences oblige them, have a right to em-"body into a church for their mutual edification :— "That this embodying is by ſome certain contract, "expreſſed or implied :—That being embodied they "have a right to chuſe their own officers :—That "theſe officers are Paſtors, Ruling Elders and Dea-"cons :—And theſe being choſen have no lordly, ar-"bitrary or impoſing power, but can only rule and "miniſter with the conſent of the brethren :—That "all churches and church officers are equal in their "rights and priviledges :—That Baptiſm is to be ad-"miniſtred only to viſible believers and their unadult "children, (and this without the ſign of the croſs :)— "That excommunication ſhould be wholly ſpiritual "and not accompanied with any penalties of a tem-"poral nature :—And finally, while they ſtrictly ob-"ſerved the Lords Day and days of Faſting and "Thankſgiving as the ſtate of Providence required, "they held that all other *times* of worſhip were not to "be regarded, but utterly relinquiſhed. Theſe were

"the

" the main principles of that ſcriptural and religious " liberty, for which our anceſtors ſuffered in England, " fled to Holland, traverſed the ocean, and fought a " dangerous retreat in theſe remote and ſavage def- " erts of North America ; that here they might fully " enjoy them to their laſt poſterity."*

It is obvious in this place to reflect on the nature and effects of perſecution. How unpromiſing a method is this of making men good ? Acts of religion performed with reluctance are not the rational ſervice of a man, nor can they poſſeſs any acceptability with God. Of what avail is " bodily exerciſe," if the mind and heart have no concurrence therewith ? Perſecution may break,—it often has broke, the heart ; but did it ever open the heart to underſtand the ſcriptures and to adore the works of God ?— Perſecution is indeed the moſt probable way of making men worſe. Conviction antecedes converſion ; and till conviction be produced, it is even better for a man to act, without any moleſtation, conformably to a falſe opinion, than that he ſhould pay an unwilling and inſincere obedience even to the laws of God. Perſecution is contrary to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity. Our Saviour did not call fire from heaven, or aſſemble battalions of Angels to ſubdue the unbelief of corrupt hearts. But, to the obſtinacy of ſcribes and phariſees, he oppoſed acts of kindneſs, miracles, arguments, exhortations and reproofs. And his Apoſtles !—they did not perſecute, but were perſecuted. They received no command to exerciſe cruelty in eſtabliſhing the pure worſhip of God. If we once admit

* Prince, 93.

admit the lawfulneſs of perſecution, what is it but to admit in every ſect throughout chriſtendom, the mutual right to vex and deſtroy? And thus, to open wide the way of hatred and revenge?

The reigning prince in the time of our fathers might ſay in defence of his meaſures, "That they will make men bethink themſelves,—examine facts and arguments which would otherwiſe have been overlooked." But what are the inſtructions of experience in this caſe? They declare that temporal puniſhments inflicted by men create either hypocrites or martyrs.

The advocate of perſecution may further ſay, "That indulgence encourages hereſy to the utter deſtruction of heretics, and it is an act of mercy to puniſh them *here*, ſo that they may *hereafter* be ſaved from everlaſting miſery." But what have been the fruits of this principle in the world? They have been inquiſitions, aſſaſſinations, violations of faith, perjuries; and it may be added, that the perſecuting zeal of religioniſts has furniſhed ſome nutriment to modern philoſophy, which threatens to overturn every inſtitution, civil and religious, that has been recommended by experience, handed down from our anceſtors, and ſanctioned by the moſt unqueſtionable marks of divine approbation.

Finally, (if more need be ſaid in diſpraiſe of that diabolical compaſſion dictating perſecution as a mean of piety) it is hoſtile to free inquiry, and the reformation of errors and abuſes, and if univerſally practiſed it muſt terminate in the utter ſubverſion of Chriſtianity.

tianity. Religious faith ſhould not depend upon faſhion or human authority, but upon the authority of God, in the exerciſe of our beſt reaſon and judgment.*

But let us renew our attention to the perſecuted *pilgrims*, and follow them in their trials and patience. Being treated with every mark of inſult and cruelty in their native land,—being expoſed to the ſevere penalties of the eccleſiaſtical law,—their perplexity and diſtreſs daily increaſing,—emigration to ſome foreign country ſeemed the only means of peace and ſafety. "Their firſt views were directed to Holland, where "the ſpirit of commerce had dictated a free toleration "of religious opinions; a bleſſing, which neither the "wiſdom of politicians, nor the charity of clergymen, "had admitted into any other of the European "ſtates."† But the execution of this purpoſe was attended with difficulty. It was neceſſary to practiſe concealment,—to give extravagant rates for paſſages. They were treacherouſly betrayed by thoſe whom they had engaged to favour their eſcape, robbed of their money, brought before the magiſtrates, and impriſoned.

"In the ſpring of 1608, they made another attempt to eſcape, but with partial ſucceſs. A part of the company who agreed to embark together had arrived on board ſhip, when the remainder were ſuddenly attached, apprehended and carried before the Juſtices of the Peace; but they, not knowing what to do with

* See this ſubject treated more diffuſely by Doctor Jortin, vol. IV. Serm. 9th.

† Dr. Belknap.

with ſo many helpleſs and diſtreſſed perſons, diſmiſſed them. This remainder having ſold their houſes and effects were dependant on the charity of their friends. Thoſe who put to ſea were overtaken by a ſevere ſtorm, narrowly eſcaped deſtruction from its fury, and were fourteen days in their paſſage to Amſterdam. Here in the courſe of the ſummer the ſcattered flock with their paſtor were happily united.

CONTINUING in this place about a year, they then removed to Leyden to avoid the infection of a controverſy which broke out in a congregation of diſſenters who had emigrated before them. In this latter city they continued for eleven years "in great "love and harmony both among themſelves and "their neighbour citizens." They were much reſpected for their diligence, fidelity and honeſty. Even the magiſtrates of the city in reproof of ſome French Proteſtants teſtified, "Theſe Engliſh have lived "among us ten years, and yet we never had any "ſuit or accuſation againſt them; but your quarrels "are continual."

BUT our anceſtors were here preſſed with urgent conſiderations to make another removal. "In the "year 1617, Mr. Robinſon and his Church begin "to think of a removal to America." The reaſons of this purpoſe deſerve to be particularly related. 1. "The difficulties in Holland diſcouraged many from "coming over to them out of England, and obliged "many to return." Governor Bradford ſays on this head, that, "Many who came to them and deſired "to be with them, could not endure the great labour

" and hard fare with other inconveniences which they " endured: But though they loved their perſons, " approved their cauſe, and honoured their ſuffer- " ings; yet they left them as it were weeping, as " Orpah did her mother-in-law Naomi; or as thoſe " Romans did Cato in Utica, who deſired to be ex- " cuſed and born with, though they could not all be " Cato's: For many, though they deſired to enjoy " the ordinances of God in their purity, and the lib- " erty of the Goſpel with them; yet, alas, they ad- " mitted of bondage with danger of conſcience, rather " than to endure theſe hardſhips; yea ſome preferred " the priſons in England, rather than this liberty in " Holland with theſe afflictions." (2.) " By reaſon " of theſe difficulties, with the licentiouſneſs of the " youth, and temptations of the place, many of their " children left their parents, ſome becoming ſoldiers, " others taking to foreign voyages, and ſome to " courſes tending to diſſoluteneſs, and the danger of " their ſouls; to the great grief of their parents, " and fear leſt their poſterity through theſe tempta- " tions and examples ſhould degenerate and religion " die among them. (3.) From an inward zeal and " great hope of laying ſome foundation, or making " way for propagating the kingdom of Chriſt to the " remote ends of the earth; though they ſhould be " but as ſtepping ſtones to others."* This relation, bearing the marks of truth,—this relation, ſimple and unaffected, combines in a pathetic manner the differ- ent motives of ſelf-preſervation, religion, and phi- lanthropy. What reproach does it caſt upon the principles and manners of our own times!

* Prince, 49.

THIS

This relation further dictates a reflection on the mixture of good and evil in every situation. In the most agreeable settlements here below there are some inconveniences, some unpleasant circumstances—something wanting to complete our happiness. This completion is in reserve for the righteous in the future kingdom of heaven. Our ancestors, though they enjoyed much comfort in the ways of God,—though they were courteously entertained, and much respected by the Dutch,—though blessed with a pastor, pious, learned and of obliging manners, were pressed with many *reasons* to seek a more agreeable residence. It is visible from the above relation that these reasons were *not of a worldly nature.* And a suspicion of this sort is removed by this circumstance, that their views were directed to a newly discovered and uncultivated country. A determination however was not formed without much deliberation and fervent prayer. The first step in the execution of their purpose was to send a deputation to the Virginia Company in London, who were also directed to inquire if the King would give them liberty of conscience in his American dominions. The letters written by Mr. Robinson and Brewster in behalf of the congregation, and presented by their agents, Carver and Cushman, are sufficiently interesting to justify a recital. To recommend themselves as proper persons for emigration, they say, (1.) "We verily believe and trust the Lord "is with us; to whom and whose service we have "given ourselves in many trials, and that he will "graciously prosper our endeavours. (2.) We are "well

" well weaned from the delicate milk of our mother-
" country, and inured to the difficulties of a ſtrange
" land. (3.) The people are, for the body of them,
" induſtrious and frugal, we think we may ſafely ſay,
" as any company of people in the world. (4.) We
" are knit together as a body in a moſt ſtrict and
" ſacred bond and covenant of the Lord; of the
" violation whereof we make great conſcience, and
" by virtue whereof we hold ourſelves ſtraitly tied to
" all care of each others good, and of the whole. (5.)
" It is not with us, as with other men; whom ſmall
" things can diſcourage, or ſmall diſcontentments
" cauſe to wiſh ourſelves at home again."* This letter, together with the good carriage of them who preſented it, produced a reſolution in the Virginia Company to favour their deſigns. " As to the King, he promiſed to connive at their religious practices, but he denied them toleration under the great ſeal."

PASSING over other incidents relating to the venerable pilgrims during the two following years, our attention is forcibly arreſted by the circumſtances of their embarkation, and voyage to America. In the ſpring of 1620, it was determined that a part of the ſociety ſhould embark for America, and make preparation for the remainder, which it was agreed ſhould follow them. To fix the doubting, to confirm the ſtrong, and to give animation to all, Mr. Robinſon delivered a diſcourſe from thoſe words in the 1ſt book of Samuel, xxiii. 3, 4. " And David's men
" ſaid unto him, *Behold we be afraid here in Judah;*
" *how much more then if we come to Keilah againſt the*
" *Philiſtines?*

* Prince, 52.

" *Philiſtines? Then David enquired of the Lord yet* " *again. And the Lord anſwered him and ſaid, Ariſe* " *and go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philiſtines* " *into thine hand.*" We can find no extracts from this ſermon: It is not difficult however to imagine, what the occaſion, and the preacher's piety dictated. The events propitious to their undertaking were probably brought into view as tokens of divine approbation, and as an earneſt in future of the divine bleſſing. " The greater number being to ſtay, require their " paſtor to ſtay with them: Their elder, Mr. Brewſter, " to go with the other: Thoſe who go firſt to be an " abſolute church of themſelves, as well as thoſe that " ſtay; with this proviſo, that as any go over or re- " turn, they ſhall be reputed as members, without " further diſmiſſion or teſtimonial: And thoſe who " tarry to follow the reſt as ſoon as they can."*

On July 20, they were prepared for the moving ſeparation of the next day by another diſcourſe from Ezra viii. 21, " *Then I proclaimed a faſt, at the river* " *Ahava, that we might afflict ourſelves before our God,* " TO SEEK OF HIM A RIGHT WAY FOR US, AND " FOR OUR LITTLE ONES, AND FOR ALL OUR " SUBSTANCE."

Of this diſcourſe we are furniſhed with a ſpecimen by Governor Winſlow, the liberality of which will excite admiration, when we conſider the bigotry of the age in which it was delivered; and even at this day, which claims the honour of high improvement, may not be unprofitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and inſtruction in righteouſneſs. The Governor informs

* Prince, 66.

informs us, that when the Plymouth people parted from their renowned Paſtor, with whom they had always lived in the moſt intire affection, "He charged "us before God and his bleſſed angels to follow "him no farther than he followed Chriſt: And "if God ſhould reveal any thing to us by any "other inſtrument of his, to be as ready to re- "ceive it as ever we were to receive any truth by "his miniſtry: For he was very confident that the "Lord had more light and truth yet to break forth "out of his holy word. He took occaſion alſo to "bewail the ſtate of the reformed churches who were "come to a period in religion, and would go no fur- "ther than the inſtruments of their reformation. As "for example, the Lutherans could not be drawn to "go beyond what Luther ſaid; for whatever part of "Gods word he had further revealed to Calvin, they "had rather die than embrace it; and ſo, ſaid he, "you ſee the Calviniſts, they ſtick where He left "them—a miſery much to be lamented: For though "they were precious, ſhining lights in their times; "yet God had not revealed his whole will to them: "And were they alive now, they would be as ready "to embrace further light as that they had received. "Here alſo he put us in mind of our church cov- "enant; whereby we engaged with God and one "another to receive whatever light or truth ſhould "be made known to us from His *written word.* But "withal exhorted us to take heed what we receive for "truth; and well to examine, compare and weigh it "with other ſcriptures before we receive it. For, "ſaid he, *it is not poſſible the chriſtian world ſhould*

"*come*

"*come so lately out of such antichristian darkness, and* "*that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at* "*once.*"* Mr. Robinson, knowing the affection of his people, and aware that this affection might lead them to entertain too much respect for his opinions, was led to suggest the cautions above related. They give us an exalted opinion of their author: They breathe a noble spirit of liberty, and are deserving of the attention of reformed churches and ministers, even in this age.

But suppressing *reflections*, let us proceed in the relation of *events*. "Having spent the evening previous to their embarkation in friendly, entertaining and christian converse, on July 22, the wind being fair, our voyagers leave the city of Leyden, being accompanied by most of their brethren, and go on board the vessel prepared for their reception: But not till they had fallen on their knees, and, by the mouth of their affectionate pastor, with watery cheeks commended themselves to the protection of Almighty God. Then they took leave with mutual embraces and many tears."

Before we follow our Fathers over the ocean, you will indulge me in a tribute of respect to their worthy pastor. This digression will be the more readily pardoned, as his character is peculiarly interesting to ministers of the Gospel. After the Apostles, he is as good a copy for their imitation as is furnished by the history of the church. "He has been described as being a man of an excellent understanding, great modesty, candour and integrity; courteous

* Prince, 90.

and

and obliging manners ; ready on conviction to acknowledge his errors ; fond of converſing with good men ; moderate and charitable, yet zealous and ſtrict in his religion : As he advanced in years, he grew mild and benevolent : He was dextrous at peace-making ; able to give good advice. Loved moſt affectionately by his flock, reſpected by the magiſtrates of Leyden, he died the 1ſt of March, 1625, in the 50th year, in the height of his reputation and uſefulneſs ; and, 90 years after his death, was ſtill remembered and lamented as a great and good man." Surely, *He was a Paſtor after God's own heart.*

WITHOUT noticing the troubles which befel our Fathers on the coaſt of England, the perils which attended them on their voyage to this continent, we ſhall land them upon this ſhore, and briefly view the hardſhips, dangers and ſorrows which *here* awaited them. We land them on this ſhore ! But to what do we introduce them ? Do we bring them to warm fires, convenient houſes, plentiful tables, friendly neighbours ? Nay. A ſweeping ſickneſs ſome years before had not ſpared even the *barbarian to ſhew them ſome little kindneſs.* It was indeed to them a matter of devout rejoicing that they had ſafely paſſed the vaſt ocean ; but they entered upon a new ſea of troubles. The winter was ſharp : The ſtorms fierce : It was dangerous to travel far by land : The coaſt was unknown. It was vain to look back the way they had come, and the forward proſpect was woods and thickets,—a diſcouraging contraſt to the cultivated fields of Europe they had lately left. And, to fill up

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the meaſure of diſcouragements, to add horror to the diſmal ſcene, a general ſickneſs, attended with great mortality, reduced them to half their number on landing. Worn out with fatigue, debilitated by diſeaſe, ſorrowful by the loſs of near connexions and intimate friends, they had to unlade and ſecure their goods, to build cottages for habitation, to conſult about laws, civil and military, and almoſt *daily*, at the cloſe of the winter, to follow one and another of their company to the grave.

But their patience and fortitude were as extraordinary as their trials. By the powerful energies of religious principle they *were not wearied nor faint in their minds*. By the armour of righteouſneſs they ſtood approved in all their afflictions, neceſſities, and diſtreſſes. Notwithſtanding the diminution of bodily ſtrength, the *inward man was daily renewed ;* and through him who loved them, and whom they alſo loved, they were *in all theſe things more than conquerors*.

The piety of our Fathers, in *doing* and *ſuffering* the will of God, merits attentive notice and high praiſe. Particularly, with what religious gratitude did they record every ſmile of divine Providence ! Though poor in the extreme, yet how much more thankful were they than we are, who have entered upon their labours with multiplied advantages ! The ſpringing ſpire of graſs,—a favourable gale to their weather-beaten ſhallop,—a pittance of corn, invited them to make the moſt liberal expreſſions of gratitude to heaven. In the preſent day, the world is ſo convulſed in opinion by the vices of men, that many are diſpoſed to doubt of the agency of God in human af-

fairs, and few are found to adore Him, the giver of every good and perfect gift. That punishment of this ingratitude and impiety may not be far off, which shall bring men to the full acknowledgment of a divine providence, the belief of which was the comfort and support of our ancestors; and its effects, both in circumstances of prosperity and adversity, alternately begat exalted praise and profound submission. We have in this and many other instances degenerated from the pious sentiments and practices of our fathers. *The harp, the viol, the tabret, the pipe, and wine are in our feasts; but we regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hand.**

But the *manners* as well as the *piety* of our Fathers deserve commendation. *They were fruitful in good works.* Their faith worked by love, purified their hearts, and made them holy in all manner of conversation. We have need to be stirred up by their example to a stricter observance of the Lord's-day,—to a greater diligence in training up the young in the ways of the Lord. Their impartial regard to justice is an exemplary reproof of modern fraud and oppression. We may learn from them the exercise of compassion to the distressed, and the genuine motions of disinterested benevolence. In one word, the details of history in our possession will justify the belief, that the first planters of Plimouth approached near to the pattern of the primitive churches in doctrine, discipline, faith and manners.

To these general encomia bestowed on the Fathers indiscriminately, this occasion requires a respectful

* Isaiah v. 12.

mention

mention of ſome particular characters, who were the leaders of the people in their hazardous enterprize, and their moſt active ſupporters in ſeaſons of afflictive trial.

THE names of Carver, Bradford, Brewſter, Standiſh, Winſlow, Cuſhman, will ever be mentioned with veneration by all who juſtly appreciate patience, courage, integrity, public ſpirit, practical wiſdom and piety. Theſe men, in their principles, feelings and conduct reſembled the ELDERS referred to in the text, of *whom the world was not worthy*, and who have all left a *good report through faith*.

IN CARVER we behold the meekneſs of Moſes, and his piety too, *chooſing to ſuffer affliction with the people of God*.

THERE was none like BRADFORD among all the people: Like Joſhua he *was full of the ſpirit of wiſdom. The Lord magnified him in the ſight of the people*.

BREWSTER, though not a prieſt was nevertheleſs like Noah *a preacher of righteouſneſs*—a *juſt man*, and *one who found grace in the ſight of God*.

STANDISH wielded *the ſword of the Lord and of Gideon*. And the people might ſay of him as the Iſraelites did of David, *Thou art worth ten thouſand of us*. He is ranked among the heroes of antiquity, *who waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens*.

WINSLOW was a *faithful meſſenger*; he gave himſelf as an *hoſtage* for his people. He was poſſeſſed of the *good underſtanding which giveth favour*.

CUSHMAN *preached peace to the brethren*: And

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though not called of God as was Aaron to the office of a *prieſt*, yet his *propheſyings* are not to be deſpiſed.*

"THEY all have obtained with poſterity a *good report* through faith: *They died in faith: They were perſuaded of the fulfilment of the divine promiſes: They embraced them and confeſſed that they were ſtrangers and pilgrims on the earth.* By their ſpirit and conduct it is plainly declared *that they ſought a better country. If they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: But they deſired a better country that is an heavenly.*"

WHILE we thus do the merited honour to the memory of our departed Anceſtors, let us claim nothing to ourſelves but from an imitation of their virtues. Let us remember thoſe words of John the Baptiſt to the Jews, "Bring forth fruits meet for re-"pentance. And think not to ſay within yourſelves, "We have Abraham to our father." And again, when the Jews ſaid unto our Saviour, Abraham is our father: he ſaid unto them, "If ye were Abra-"ham's children ye would do the works of Abra-"ham."

THE hiſtory we contemplate not only furniſhes exemplary *characters*, but inſtructive and intereſting *events*. We ſhall mention a few of them, and recommend them to the riſing generation as containing leſſons to the heart and head, calculated not only to amuſe innocently, but to make them wiſer and better. THE

* See his excellent Sermon on Self-Love, delivered 1621.

THE firſt interview with the native Indians has many engaging particulars, the detail of which muſt excite in every reader of ſenſibility twice the intereſt of the moſt enchanting romance.

THE ill ſucceſs of their firſt plan of labouring in common is inſtructive, and if evidence were wanting, it proves that plenty is beſt ſecured when every man plants and waters his own ground, for his own private benefit, and truſts to perſonal exertions for a ſupport. After our fathers had made a diviſion of land (not for an inheritance, but only to till) "it "made all induſtrious,—gave content. Even the "women went into the field to work, and more "corn was planted than ever."

THE treaty made with Maſſaſoit is a valuable document relating to ancient times. It ſtipulates reciprocal benefits; it is well worded, and what is more, it ſhews that the parties meant *to do juſtly*.*

IN the progreſs of the hiſtory before us, it is highly intereſting to read the account of the friendly viſit to Maſſaſoit, when he was ſick. Mr. Winſlow was

* League of Friendſhip between Governor Carver and Maſſaſoit.

"Art. 1ſt. That neither he nor his ſhould injure any of ours.

2. That if they did, he ſhould ſend the offender that we might puniſh him.

3. That if our tools were taken away, he ſhould reſtore them: And if any of ours did any harm to any of his, we would do the like to them.

4. If any unjuſtly warred againſt him, we would aid him; and if any warred againſt us, he ſhould aid us.

5. He ſhould certify his neighbour confederates of this, that they might not wrong us, but be compriſed in the conditions of peace.

6. That when their men come to us, they ſhould leave their bows and arrows behind them, as we ſhould leave our pieces when we come to them.—And thus doing, King James would eſteem him as his friend and ally."

This league laſted above fifty years. *Prince*, 102.

was appointed to this ſervice, having Hobamock for a guide and interpreter. It was rumoured by ſome Indians, as they purſued their journey, that Maſſaſoit was dead. The eulogy of Hobamock is irreſiſtibly eloquent. "My loving ſachem! many have I known, but never any like thee"! Then turning to me (i. e. Winſlow) he ſaid, whilſt I lived I ſhould never ſee his like among the Indians. He was no liar, he was not bloody and cruel like other Indians; in anger and paſſion he was ſoon reclaimed; eaſy to be reconciled toward ſuch as had offended him; ruled by reaſon in ſuch meaſure as he would not ſcorn the advice of mean men; and that he governed his men better with few ſtrokes than others did with many; truly loving where he loved; yea, he feared we had not a faithful friend left among the Indians, ſhewing how often he reſtrained their malice. He continued a long ſpeech, with ſuch ſigns of lamentation and unfeigned ſorrow as would have made the hardeſt heart relent."

HAVE we not here a *greater* than Alexander the *Great?* Might not the old and new tyrants in Europe profit by meditation on this character of Maſſaſoit? To what *chriſtian* prince can we juſtly attribute a character of more amiableneſs and worth?—The viſit of Winſlow to this excellent Sachem was a practical comment on that apoſtolic precept, "*Is any ſick? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith ſhall ſave the ſick, and the Lord ſhall raiſe him up.*"

CLOSING

Closing our relation of the things which happened in old time, let us look for one moment to the preſent ſtate of our country. From ſmall and weak beginnings how extenſive the population, how numerous the improvements of Engliſh America! When we contemplate the preſent importance of the United States in connexion with a period ſhort of 200 years, we have a comment on the prophetic expreſſion, "A nation born at once." In the courſe of two centuries and our ſons will be planted on the banks of the Miſſiſippi, and the wilderneſs beyond "ſhall bloſſom as a roſe." But, alas, a retroſpect of paſt events begets the unpleaſant anticipation of wars and fightings. We ſee in future proſpect the Kings of the *South*, begotten of luxury, pride, licentiouſneſs and impiety, invading the hardy inhabitants of the North. We ſee the armies of the Eaſt and Weſt encountering each other at ſome narrow paſs in the mountains, like the armies of Europe and Aſia at the ſtreights of Thermopylæ. We ſee thrones and ſceptres, baſtiles and fetters, the puniſhment of heaven on guilty men, who no longer deſerve liberty, or are capable of enjoying her. Should all this be prevented,—it muſt happen through the kind interpoſition of that Being who "rules the raging of the ſea, and ſtilleth the tumult of the people."

"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice" in hope.——

A Prayer.

ALMIGHTY GOD! who haſt made of one blood all nations of men inhabiting the face of the earth; who haſt determined their times, and the bounds of their habitation! We proſtrate ourſelves before Thee in humble acknowledgment of all the mercies ſhewn to our Fathers. Thou didſt deliver them in ſix troubles, yea in ſeven, and nothing *fatal* overtook them. In famine thou didſt redeem them from death, and in war from the power of the ſword. Thou didſt deliver them from the hands of the oppreſſors; and when they wandered in the wilderneſs, and found no city to dwell in, then they cried unto Thee and thou didſt hear their voice and look on their afflictions.

We have heard with our ears, our Fathers have told us what work thou didſt in their day, in the times of old, How thou didſt drive out the heathen with thy hand, and didſt plant *them*, and cauſe the light of thy countenance to ſhine upon them. The things which we have heard we will not hide from our children, but ſhew to the generation to come the praiſes of the Lord, ſo that they may know them, and ariſe and declare them to *their* children.

We earneſtly deſire in ourſelves a greater reſemblance of our Fathers in their concernment for the

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ſoul and things of another world; in their faithfulneſs and conſtancy in the profeſſion of religion; in their zeal and activity in the diſcharge of duty. As thou didſt call them from the evil of this preſent world, a choſen generation, to know thy will, to ſeek thy face, to know thy ways; wilt thou alſo call us effectually to virtue, and may our light, as theirs did, ſhine before men and lead them to glorify Thee.

We pray for all *reformed* churches; may they be more reformed, and every plant not of thy planting be plucked up. May an end be put to all uſurpation and tyranny, to all infringement on the rights of conſcience and chriſtian liberty. And may no weapon formed againſt the diſciples of Chriſt be permitted to proſper. Haſten the deliverance of thoſe who ſuffer for bearing teſtimony to the truth and are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake.

Bless the churches in our country. May not the fruits of chriſtian profeſſors be briars and thorns, but righteouſneſs, peace and joy in the exerciſe of a holy ſpirit. May every thing be gathered from among thy people which worketh abomination, and may they be *wholly* ſanctified through thy word and ſpirit.

Bless the preachers of the Goſpel. May they be faithful as paſtors of the flock, and exemplary in all their converſation. Wilt thou furniſh them for the good work of opening the eyes of men, and turning them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of ſin unto holineſs. While they ſtop the mouths of falſe prophets by ſoundneſs of doctrine and purity of

character, may their labours in edifying the body of *Chriſt* be crowned with full ſucceſs. May they behave themſelves not as having dominion over the faith of chriſtians, but as helpers of their joy. As meſſengers of thy heavenly will, may they make full and clear manifeſtations of the truth, and commend themſelves to every man's conſcience in thy ſight. May they *feel* the joy of that Salvation which they preach, the force of every motive they urge, and by their conduct as well as by their ſtated miniſtrations be preachers of righteouſneſs.

Bless the worſhipping ſociety in this place. May the rock of the pilgrims, and every veſtige of antient times which they have among them, be aſſociated with the recollection of thoſe chriſtian virtues by which their fathers were diſcriminated from the profane world. We pray for the unity and peace of the church in this place. May all unreaſonable averſions be ſubdued. And by reflecting on the many important truths in which they agree, may they be led *with more candor* to diſcuſs thoſe points about which they differ.

Bless to our perfect eſtabliſhment in piety and virtue the recollection of this day. While we call up to view the hiſtory of our anceſtors, and praiſe Thee for all the proviſions of thy goodneſs, ſupporting and comforting them in ſeaſons of ſorrow and danger :— While we have a clear and grateful perception of *our* advantages, in many reſpects the fruit of *their* labours, may we with faithfulneſs hold up to view their principles

ciples to posterity, and urge upon our children the imitation of their christian virtues.

May we individually be gathered to our fathers in peace, having in the likeness of their zeal and fidelity served Thee in our day and generation. Unto the only wise God our Saviour be ascriptions of praise forever. AMEN.

THE

SUBSTANCE OF A

DISCOURSE,

PREACHED

IN THE SECOND PARISH,

PLYMOUTH,

DECEMBER 22, 1806,

IN MEMORY

OF THE

LANDING OF OUR FOREFATHERS,

22 DECEMBER, 1620.

BY SETH STETSON,

PASTOR OF THE SECOND CHURCH IN SAID TOWN.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

Boston:

PRINTED BY E. LINCOLN, WATER-STREET.

1807.

AS the following discourse was delivered from small notes, and without any design of publication, the attentive hearer may notice some small difference; though the substance has been carefully preserved.

A

DISCOURSE.

PSALM lxxviii. 1—7.

Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord; and his strength and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born: who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments.

IT has been the practice among all nations, for children to remember their deceased fathers, and to commemorate their worthy deeds.

The children of Israel were the first chosen nation of God. All the inhabitants of the earth were created by God, and so are his offspring; but Israel was his peculiar people. His favours, and wonderful works towards them, were greater than to any other nation. And the prophets and elders of Israel often reminded

them of what God had done for them and their forefathers.

Particular days, on which some remarkable providence occurred, were set apart, to call to mind the power and mercy of God in their behalf. Instance the days of the Passover; a time specified by God, in which a feast was to be kept from generation to generation, to commemorate the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. And the days of Purim, instituted by Esther the Queen, and Mordecai the Jew, in time of Israel's captivity in Babylon, in remembrance of God's remarkable interposition in saving the Jews from the destruction decreed upon them by the wickedness of Haman. Hence, it is not improper to keep a day in a suitable manner, in calling to mind the wonderful works of God to our ancestors; and in praising his holy name.

On this day, one hundred and eighty six years ago, our forefathers with joyful hearts stepped their feet on this then savage and dreary shore. On this day, the first rays of gospel light dawned upon this then dark and heathen land.

Shall we not then, my brethren, on this occasion, recount some of the many wonderful mercies of God, and make them known to our children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments?

It is probable that no nation under heaven resembles God's chosen people Israel, more than the United States of America; especially New England. May it not then be profitable and entertaining briefly to run a parallel between the children of Israel and us? That

as they had cause to praise the Lord, so we have equal or greater reason, to praise his holy name?

1. The fathers of Israel were godly men. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob feared God; and by faith lived pilgrims on the earth; yea, it is probable, that the greatest part in the line of their ancestors were true friends to God. It is true, the immediate predecessors of Abraham are represented as worshippers of other gods; Josh. xxiv. 14, 15, yet there were some of the oldest men on the earth, that were no doubt godly; especially Eber, who was born eight generations before Jacob, and outlived his own children of the fourth and fifth generation after him, till Jacob was seventy-nine years of age; and from whom it is likely the children of Israel were called Hebrews. Gen. xi.

So our forefathers were men that feared God. While many in old England, their native land, forsook the living and true God, and became vain in their imaginations, and run into error and superstition; our ancestors were kept by the power and grace of God, so as to maintain his worship, and reverence his name. God called them to leave their natural state of idolatry and sin, and they obeyed his voice, and became his followers.

2. The sons of Israel, with their families, removed into the land of Egypt, in a time of affliction. The staff of life was cut off in Canaan; but they heard that there was corn in Egypt. Thither, therefore, they removed, and for a time were comfortably supported.

So our forefathers removed from England to Holland. In their native land they were ready to famish,

from persecution, and the want of the bread of life. Israel dwelt many years in Goshen; and our fathers about eleven in Leyden.

3. The children of Israel were brought into difficulty in Egypt. Taskmasters drove them to hard labour. Their children were torn from them and cast into the river. Their religion, and their God, were neglected and opposed.

So our forefathers, in Holland, were forced to hard labour, to get their bread. Their children, that were dear to them as their own souls, were obliged to leave them, and venture on the high seas, or which is far worse, enter the army, and venture their lives in the high places of the field of battle. The Lord's day was neglected or abused, by the Hollanders, in idleness and wicked recreations; so that their children were in danger of being destroyed by their evil example.

4. The Israelites had pious and able teachers and rulers. Moses and Aaron, and the elders, were endowed with faith and understanding, to teach and lead the people in the way they should go.

So our forefathers had a pious and able Robinson, Brewster, Carver, Bradford, and Winslow, with many others, to counsel and go before them in their civil and religious concerns. Moses instructed the children of Israel, and fasted and prayed for them, and wrote respecting their future conduct. So pious Robinson preached, fasted, and prayed, and wrote to his dear people. A short time before they left Holland, a day was set apart for prayer and fasting, on which Mr. Robinson took the following text, Ezra viii. 21. *Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to*

seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

5. The Israelites left Egypt at Ramases, to seek another country. They had many dangers to encounter at the Red Sea; and finally by God's outstretched arm of mercy, they landed on the shore of the wilderness, and sang God's praise.

So our forefathers left Holland, at a place called Delfs-Haven, to seek another country. They had difficulties in their two ships, in which they set out. The Speedwell, commanded by Capt. Reinolds, was so leaky that they were obliged to leave her; and they betook themselves to the May-Flower, commanded by Capt. Jones. Cooped up in this one small ship, and exposed to violent storms, and in danger of being lost upon the shoals, made their situation very distressing. Jones, proving treacherous, in a storm, put in at Cape Cod, in the month of November, 1620. And there the godly company fell upon their knees, and blessed God, who had brought them in safety across the wide Atlantic ocean.

6. The Israelites, when they had arrived at the other side of the Red Sea, found themselves in a waste howling wilderness, where there was none to help them but the mighty God of Jacob.

So our forefathers found themselves in a wilderness, among savage beasts and men. How trying their situation! Surely, nothing less than faith in the invisible Divine Saviour could enable them to endure such a scene of trials! No friends to welcome them. No inns to entertain them. No houses to shelter them. The barbarians, not like those of Melita, who showed

Paul and his company no little kindness. A cold winter before them. A wide ocean behind them. The master of the ship threatening to turn them on shore and leave them. Their provisions small, and fast wasting away, and they in no situation to purchase more. None but God to help them. And blessed be his name, he did not leave them to perish. They called, and HE answered them. He saw their distress, and pitied them.

7. The Israelites were required to keep the Sabbath, in commemoration of their deliverance from Egypt, and safe landing on the shore of the wilderness.

Our forefathers remembered the Christian Sabbath, and kept it holy. Clark's Island witnessed their first Sabbath worship. Having narrowly escaped the stormy sea, with their boat's crew, they took shelter the first night on the lonely Island, above named, in the mouth of Plymouth harbour. The next day, being the Lord's day, they devoutly offered praise and worship to the God of the sea and the dry land. O how differently do many, on the sea and land, treat the Lord, and the day on which he arose from the dead!

8. Israel's God provided manna from heaven, and water from the rock; and sent them quails around their camp. A pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, defended and comforted them.

So our forefathers found the same God, rich in mercy, opening his treasures hid in the sand, of fish, and corn, and beans; and beasts and fowls, sent within their reach, to supply their wants. God directed

them to his storehouses of Indian corn and pulse, buried in the earth by the natives, which sustained them through the winter, and supplied them with seed for the following summer.

9. God sent diseases upon Israel in the wilderness, of which many died.

So our forefathers were sorely visited the same winter they landed. Of one hundred and one persons, who first came over, nearly half died before the next spring. Their suffering, for want of the conveniences of life, occasioned their death, rather than their sin. They came here to enjoy God and religion; but God saw fit to bring many of them quickly to their rest, where they might enjoy him without sorrow. God reduced their number and strength, like Gideon's army, when they drew near to the camp of the Midianites, lest they vaunt themselves against him, by saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Judges vii. And the power and mercy of God were no less visible in protecting and prospering our ancestors, than in succeeding the three hundred men with trumpets, lamps, and pitchers against the host of Midian.

10. Israel had the law delivered to them at Mount Sinai; and the whole camp trembled, and feared the God of Israel. And no doubt the law of the Lord converted many souls.

Our fathers had the gospel dispensed to them in Mount Zion; and to them it was glad tidings of great joy. And by them it was communicated to many people, who had been living without hope, and without God in the world. Many of the natives, who had been sitting in the region and shadow of death, saw

the great light. Our fathers left their mother country, crossed the boisterous sea, fought and suffered, bled and died, to bring us their children the glorious gospel. O that it might prove a savour of life unto life to our immortal souls!

11. Israel had a tabernacle erected in the wilderness, where God was worshipped.

So our forefathers built a fort, for glory and defence. The first house of Christian worship was erected in this town. There the believing tribe resorted in time of danger from the surrounding savages. There they united in prayer and praise to the great Shepherd of Israel, and Captain of salvation. There the gospel trumpet began to be blown, which has sounded through the land, and gathered a great company to the standard of Jesus Christ.

12. The Spirit of grace was many times poured down upon the children of Israel; true religion revived, and many souls converted, in the days of Joshua, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

So God has showered down of his Spirit and grace, upon our fathers and us, at different times and places. In the days of Hooker, Shepard, Edwards, Bellamy and Whitefield, copious and extensive showers of special grace watered many parts of this American Israel. And in later times, while a Hovey, Robbins, and Hopkins sowed the seed of God's word, refreshing dews of grace, and the reviving beams of the Sun of righteousness, succeeded their labours for the propagation of truth, and the salvation of many souls. This ancient town has been visited, a number of times, with the outpourings of God's Spirit; and God has

been forming a people for his praise. Have we not, my brethren, seen with our eyes, and felt in our hearts, the blessed effects of sovereign grace? Though many still neglect the great salvation; yet have we not reason to adore and praise our divine Redeemer, for the powerful displays of his mercy, in bringing some of our kindred and acquaintance out of darkness into his marvellous light; and in causing them to have joy and peace in believing? And have we not heard of the stately goings of our God, in different parts of our land? O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and wonderful works to the children of men!

13. The Israelites had potent enemies to encounter, Amalek, and Og the king of Bashan, and Sihon king of the Amorites, came out to battle against them. But the Lord hardened Sihon's spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into their hands. Deut. ii. 30. The Lord put his fear upon their enemies, and helped his chosen people to overcome them.

So our forefathers were surrounded with many cruel and powerful enemies. But God gave them success against their malicious foes, and delivered them in many times of danger. At Namsheket, a place on the Cape, at Plymouth, and at many other places, their enemies were made to flee before them. King Philip, Corbitant, and other individuals; together with the whole tribe of the Narragansets, exerted all their power and savage skill to root out our few and feeble ancestors; but God was their shield and defence, their rock and their high tower. Fear fell upon them, and they were taken in their own craftiness,

14. God raised up friends for Israel. Jethro, Rahab and the Gibeonites.

So God turned the hearts of some to befriend our forefathers. Samoset, Squanto, Hobamak, and king Massasoit, and John Sagamore are Indian names, worthy to be had in remembrance. These, with many other Sachems, and some whole tribes, entered into a league of friendship with our forefathers, and abode by it, to the great prosperity and comfort of the little feeble band. Thus we see, that the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will. Prov. xx. 1.

15. God drave out the enemies of Israel by little and little.

So the enemies of our forefathers were driven out or conquered by degrees. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein; and he has a right to give it to whom he will. The nations were destroyed before Israel, because of their abominations. The Lord sent the hornet among them. But our forefathers purchased their land of the aborigines of the country. And God made room for them, by sending a mortal disease among the natives, a few years before they came; so that not one in twenty was left alive. Their bones and skulls were found scattered over the ground; the living not being able to bury the dead. But for many years, our fathers had perplexity and war, from their savage neighbours. Many individuals and families lost their lives by the barbarous scalping knife. But after many years' contest, their subtle enemies either retired back into the desert, made peace, or were destroyed.

16. The Israelites were directed by God in the right way into the wilderness, lest war overcome them.

So God directed our fathers to this part of the country, instead of another, which they had in view; where, in all probability, had they have gone, they would have been destroyed. The three first attempts made to settle Virginia were in vain. The Indians cut them all off. And in many other places, the first settlers were driven from their habitations. Had our forefathers landed near the river Hudson, as they intended, they might have seen such war, as to have caused them to return to the land from whence they came out. But though there be many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. Prov. xix. 21. God led them about like Israel of old, to a right habitation. And even the treachery of their enemies was overruled by God for their best good. The Lord is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. Isai. xxviii. 29.

17. Israel multiplied greatly in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in Canaan; with men and cattle, cities and goods. Thousands and millions sprang from the threescore and ten souls of Jacob's family, that sojourned in Egypt.

So our forefathers have been blessed with a great multitude of children. More than a million now breathe in New England; and about five millions in the United States. A large portion of these are descendants from our English forefathers. Israel left Egypt, and entered Canaan with an army of about six hundred thousand harnessed for war. And more than eight hundred thousand veteran troops can be

mustered to battle in the United States. And all this vast multitude have their houses, towns, and cities to dwell in, with their families and kindred. And their habitations and fields are filled with abundance of goods and cattle, for their support and comfort. Ships go and come from far, and bring the riches and delights of the earth, into our ports, rivers and stores. Surely the Lord hath rarely dealt so with any people. Let us exalt his name together.

18. Israel, while in the wilderness, did not enjoy that full prosperity, that they did after their quiet settlement in Canaan.

So our forefathers did not enjoy that independence, freedom and prosperity, till they were separated from Great Britain, and dwelt safely in their own land.

19. Israel had to contend many years, before they obtained a settled peace and rest.

So our fathers had a severe contest, before they obtained their independence and peace. A war, which lasted about eight years, with one of the most powerful nations in Europe, cost America many lives, and much treasure. But the God of armies gave our fathers success, and crowned us with glory and honour, in view of the wondering nations. The armed men, of the tribes on the other side Jordan, left their families, and crossed over before their brethren into Canaan; and assisted them against their enemies, until they obtained a quiet possession of the lot of their inheritance. And France proved to be a powerful and generous ally, and helped America to independence and peace. O that she had not forgotten to erect a great altar, like the pious Israelites, as a witness, that they would not turn from the worship of the true God!

20. Those, who led Israel out of Egypt into the wilderness, did not lead them into Canaan. Moses and Aaron, and all the fathers and elders, died in the wilderness, except two. But Joshua was honoured as the saviour of his nation. He led them to victory and rest.

So the godly souls, which led our forefathers from Europe to America, did not live to see their children and country free. They did much to prepare the way. They led them almost through the wilderness, to the shore of Jordan. But WASHINGTON, with his worthy companions, and valiant band, were made instrumental in the hand of JESUS, the King of kings, to deliver this American Israel from all their troubles. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; Heb. ix. 27. so Joshua, and Washington, those successful conquerors, have been conquered by death, and gone to the judgment to give up their accounts. And with them, how many kings, and captains, and mighty men, both free and bond, will stand before King Jesus, to receive according to the deeds done in the body!

21. Israel, after they went into the land of Canaan, and were greatly prospered, forgat the Lord, who redeemed them from the house of bondage; and provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, by their sin; so that he sent the famine, pestilence, and sword among them, which slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.

So God has been visiting us, by various judgments, for our sin. How many thousands have been cut off by the pestilence, in some of our large towns and ci-

ties! How many places have been visited with drought, blasting, and mildew! How frequently have our orchards, gardens, and fields, been overrun with God's great army, the cankerworm, and other destructive insects! And have we not seen, or heard, of the bloody sword being unsheathed, and numbers of our fellow citizens falling on our frontiers, and on the more savage coast of Barbary? The Philistines, and other nations where left to prove Israel. And we may find the nations prove too hard for us, if our sins provoke God to sell us into the hand of our enemies.

22. But when Israel repented, and cried unto God, he raised them up deliverers, and saved them from those that oppressed them. For their sin, God frequently sold them into the hand of the Moabites, Canaanites, Midianites, Ammonites, and the Philistines, who oppresssed them a number of years; but when they felt their distress, and were disposed to cry unto God, he raised them up an Ehud, a Deborah and Barak; a Gideon, a Jephtha, and a Sampson, who delivered them and judged Israel.

So we, my brethren, should repent, and humble ourselves, and cry unto God, that divine judgments may be turned away from us. That God may be pleased to raise up wise and good men to go before us in our civil and religious concerns. And that our country may be blessed with pious prophets, priests, and rulers, with peace, righteousness and plenty; like Israel in the days of Samuel and David, Solomon and Jehoiada.

23. While the twelve tribes of Israel were united under Solomon, they had peace and prosperity; but

when they became divided, they had idolatry, war, and captivity.

So it may possibly be with us. Now we are united, free, and happy; but party spirit and divisions may deluge our country in war and wretchedness. Let us endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And let the Rehoboams hearken to the counsel of the old men; and the Jeroboams go back again into Egypt.

24. Finally. Israel, after experiencing the wonderful mercy of God for many years, and many godly souls having died in faith; an unbelieving and wicked generation arose, which contemned the prophets, transgressed the commandments, and crucified the Son of God. Then their destruction hastened on. Many were destroyed. Many were carried captive, and scattered by their enemies among all nations. Their country taken from them; their pleasant things spoiled; their hearts hardened; and the gospel of the kingdom given to others, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness.

So let us fear, my brethren, lest God cast us out of this good land, and take from us the gospel, with its attendant blessings. Israel of old is set before us, for our example and warning. God is the same. When they sinned, he frowned; when they feared and repented, he smiled on them. Let us mark well their treatment of God, and His dealings with them. When they had men of faith to govern them, they were prospered; but when the wicked bore rule the people mourned. O that the God of Israel may ever be our God, and we ever act as becomes his people!

CONCLUSION.

1. Let us remember, that God is to have all the praise and glory, for his wonderful works to our forefathers, and to us their children. He lifts up one nation and casts down another. The prosperity of nations and individuals depends wholly on God. *The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor favour to men of skill.* Eccl. ix. 11. *Let us sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten us the victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.* Psal. xcviii. 1, 2.

2. Let us consider, whether we have not, as a people, been rebellious against God, under the reception of his favours. Can we compare with our forefathers? If we attempt it, shall we not be found wanting? Are we as conscientious in observing the Lord's day? Are we as careful to give God the hours, which he has consecrated to himself? Are we disposed to keep holy time in a holy manner; *and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and honour him, not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words?* Isaiah lviii. 13.

Are we as watchful and prayerful; as careful to support family and closet religion, and as anxious to train up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Do we live in the fear of the Lord all the day long? Do we feel our dependence on God? Do we realize our accountability to the Searcher of all

hearts? Do we acknowledge God in all our ways, that he may direct our steps for us. Do we strive to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, by a well ordered life and conversation? So did our forefathers.

Doctor Mather writes, that for many years after our fathers came to this country, it was a rare thing to find a prayerless family; but now are there not many in every place to be found, who are heads of families, that cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God?

How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed, in this respect!

Are we as anxious to spread the gospel among the destitute, as were our forefathers? The cause of Christ lay near their hearts. They had good will to men. They knew from the Bible and their own experience, that mankind were in a lost state by nature. They realized a judgment to come. Heaven and hell were realities in their view. And life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel. Hence, they exerted themselves, to spread the knowledge of the Lord; that those, who were perishing for lack of vision, might be saved.

Have we become Christ's friends? Have we devoted our all to his service and glory? Have we paid our vows unto God? Have we improved our Lord's money to the advancement of his kingdom? Is it our heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel, that they might be saved?

Are we as careful to promote a reformation in the lives and morals of our kindred and citizens, as were our ancestors? Do we let our light shine before others, that they, seeing our good works, may glorify our Fa-

ther, who is in heaven? Do we exhort one another daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? Are we faithful in discharging relative duties? Are husbands and wives true helpmeets to each other, in prayer, and faith, and hope? Are parents as prayerful and laborious for their children's souls, as their bodies; their eternal interest, as for their worldly? Are children obedient, submissive, and affectionate to their parents? Are masters compassionate and faithful to their servants; and servants dutiful to their masters? Are ministers as spiritual, evangelical, and faithful, as formerly? Are people as engaged to attend to the word and ordinances of Christ, as in years and months past? Are magistrates as great fearers of God, and haters of covetousness, as their worthy predecessors? Are subjects as much terrified from evil doings; and as zealous to do well now, as a century ago? If we cannot answer in the affirmative, let us immediately repent, and turn to God and our duty.

3. Let us feel the importance of contending earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints; which our forefathers, in a good degree, embraced and held fast.

But let us receive the good counsel of pious Robinson to his people, when they were about to leave Holland, and come to America; "That they should expect greater light in the church, and ought not to be divided from their brethren because they had different degrees of light in divine things!" The apostle John represents some Christians as little children, some young men, some fathers. Should these brethren, of different degrees of knowledge and grace, be separated from each other? Should those who think themselves

holier than others, turn their more weak and ignorant brethren out of doors, because they have not arrived to their stature? "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Phil. iii. 16.

So far as our forefathers followed Christ, so far we should follow them. But we are commanded to call no man Father on the earth; for one is our Father which is in heaven. Matt. xxiii. 18.

But our forefathers believed the doctrines of grace; and they were the doctrines of the reformation. Luther, Melancthon and Calvin, and the other reformers, were united in holding the same system of truth. The doctrines of divine sovereignty and decrees, predestination, election, reprobation; total depravity of the human will; regeneration by the irresistible power of the Spirit; justification by faith alone, and that faith the gift of God; by grace, not of works, through the atoning blood of Christ; and the final perseverance of the saints in holiness and good works to eternal life, were doctrines believed and loved by the Reformers, and our forefathers.

And as these doctrines are according to God's word, and promotive of true godliness, we should ever hold them precious. For these we should earnestly contend. And if these truths have a proper effect on our hearts, we shall exert ourselves for our children of the rising generation; that, by grace, they may be taught to fear the Lord who has been our shield and defence. Let the goodness and mercy of God to us and our fathers influence us to keep his commands; that the blessings and privileges, transmitted to us, may be handed down,

by us, to the latest generation. Soon the little ones, now coming on the stage of life, will take our possessions and places in church and state. How important, then, that they be trained up in the way they should go, that when they are old, they may not depart from it. Then they will keep this forefathers' day in a Christian manner, and call us blessed. Then they will be good citizens, God's friends, and a happy people.

And finally, having come out of spiritual Egypt, the bondage of sin; crossed the Red Sea of regeneration; travelled through the wilderness of this world; and passed the Jordan of death; we shall meet in the promised Canaan of rest, where pious parents, who meet their pious children, will say to the King, Here are we, and the children thou hast given us.

AMEN.

AN ODE,

In commemoration of the landing of our FOREFATHERS *in* PLYMOUTH, *Dec.* 22, 1620.

Ask thy Father and he will show thee. MOSES.
The Lord hath done great things for us. PSALMIST.

1. WITH sympathetic sway,
Commemorate the day,
Our fathers came;
From England's hostile shore,
By persecution sore,
Crimson'd with Martyr's gore,
They cross'd the main.

2. An asylum to seek,
They cross'd the raging deep,
Conscience their star;
By God's approving grace,
It aids them to this place,
In this drear wilderness.
God's name revere.

3. By troubles drove from home,
Amid stern winter's gloom,
They landed here;
No friend to give relief,
Or mitigate their grief,
But foes to mercy deaf,
With bow and spear.

4. They foes, nor dangers fear,
Nor winter's cold severe,
Nor death's cold hand,
That thin'd them off apace,
Nor godly Carver's death,
All could not shake their faith,
To quit the land.

5. Then while we tread the soil,
The blessings of their toil,
We'll not forget
The end for which they came,
To spread the gospel's fame,
While we enjoy the same,
God's praise repeat.

6. Sons of Columbia, join
To praise the hand divine;
Daughters rejoice;
And as ye praise His name,
Sing our Forefathers' fame,
Who hither laid your claim;
Loud raise your voice.

7. Tho' yonder silent tombs
Contain their mould'ring bones,
Their names yet live;
The wonders they have done
Shall go from son to son,
That people yet unborn
Shall sing his praise.

F. B.

FINIS.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT

PLYMOUTH,

DECEMBER 22, 1815,

AT THE

ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

OF THE

First Landing of our Ancestors at that Place.

BY JAMES FLINT,
Minister of the church in the East parish of Bridgewater.

Delivered and published at the request of the gentlemen, composing the committee of the town of Plymouth.

BOSTON :
PRINTED BY LINCOLN & EDMANDS, NO. 53, CORNHILL,
For Joseph Avery, Plymouth.
1816.

The reader is referrea, for a full and regular detail of the historical facts alluded to in the following Discourse, to the 2d volume of American Biography by the late Dr. Belknap.

SERMON.

WE *have a goodly heritage.* Ps. xvi. 6.

THE event, which we have assembled once more to commemorate, is deeply interesting in itself, highly instructive in the causes, which led to it, most important in the consequences, which have resulted from it, and is every way worthy to be ranked among those signal achievements and remarkable epochs in the history of nations, the remembrance of which every civilized people has sought to perpetuate by monuments, by painting,* by song, and the annual observance of festive or religious rites, suited to the character of the event to be celebrated. The landing of the first fathers of New-England has high claims to be gratefully and religiously remembered by every successive generation of their descendants. It was the dawn of a new day upon this new world. And, when the christian pilgrims first set foot upon these shores, we may imagine a voice to have been heard, perhaps of the good angels, who had guarded them across the deep, congratulating the solitary wilderness, and causing it to resound with the accomplished prediction of the prophet, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

The rock, on which they first stepped, when they took possession of this land, is, with reason, piously

* See Note A. at the end.

preserved and visited by their posterity, as an appropriate monument of that event. It is to their posterity, what the heap of stones upon the margin of Jordan was to the children of the Israelites, a monument to remind them of the wonders, which God wrought for their fathers. It is also a fit memorial of their sufferings, their toils and their virtues. It is not, indeed, covered over with ostentatious records of what they endured, or achieved. For they were not actuated by earthly ambition and vanity, like those military adventurers and conquerors, who erect arches and pillars to their own fame. They sought not glory from men, but "the glory, which cometh from God only," and were ambitious only of a "name written in the Lamb's book of life."

But if this rock bears no written record of the names and achievements of these modest and much enduring soldiers of the cross, it needs only to be touched by the magic wand of imagination and memory, and, more miraculous than the effect produced upon the rock in the wilderness by the rod of Moses, there issues from it a fountain of instruction, of ancient and affecting recollections; it becomes animate and eloquent, and verifies the assertion of the poet, that there may be "sermons in stones." We stand upon it, and there opens to us, not indeed a vein of silver or of gold, but of what is far more precious, a vein of serious and pious meditation—a mine of solemn and salutary reflection upon the days that are past, the rapidity of the flight of time, the feebleness and transient existence of man, the successive generations, that have gone before us, the origin, growth, revolutions, and decay of nations, the changes of human opinions and forms in government and religion, and the vanity of all else, but virtue, piety, confidence in God, and that "sure and certain hope" of immortality and

heaven, to which the sincere christian "is begotten again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

These and a crowd of kindred ideas throng into the mind when we contemplate the *rock of the pilgrims*, and while, as at this time, we are assembled upon the spot, which first afforded a resting place to the weary voyagers, on which they first erected their domestic altars, on which the first Bethel, in this land of idolaters, was consecrated by christian rites, by a rational and spiritual worship of the true God.

Sons, as we claim to be, of these ancient worthies, and heirs of these renowned servants of God, let us prove our claim of kindred, and right of inheritance to be legitimate, by elevating our minds, while we attempt to honour their memory, to that height of exaltation above this world, that lofty standard of duty, and of pure devotion to God and their Redeemer, which marked their characters, and which distinguished the founders of New-England, from those of every other commonwealth.

We do not, however, observe this solemnity from a superstitious veneration of our fathers. Saints, as they certainly were, and as worthy to be canonized as any on the Roman calendar, yet we have no faith in their power to help us in their present bright abode. With us there is but one Mediator between God and man. We would demonstrate our respect for their characters, our admiration of their virtues, and our gratitude for the "goodly heritage," which has come down from them to us, by often recurring to their history with renewed interest, by recounting their sufferings with a filial sympathy, by repeating their eulogy with the honest pride of children, who would thus learn to emulate the worth of their fathers, and, who, having no cause to blush for them, would have none to blush for themselves. We would thus, by

frequent contemplation of what was great and good in their characters, hope to catch something of their spirit, and to feel the influence of the sacred motives from which they acted. We would hope, that being thus often reminded of what it cost our fathers to transmit to their children the "goodly heritage," which we possess, we shall be the better able to appreciate its value, and consequently be more impressed with our obligations and inducements to transmit it, in our turn, to *our* children, unimpaired, and undiminished in all its rich immunities and blessings.

When we speak of the "goodly heritage," which has come down to us from our fathers, we mean something more than the soil, that sustains our bodies—something of higher value than "the goods and chattels," which perish with the using, and which are conveyed by parchment from father to son. We mean that which can be transmitted only from soul to soul—the patrimony of mind, of sentiment, of principles; the character, spirit, examples, institutions, the laws and privileges, the light, hopes and consolations of religion, which, as heirs of the pilgrims, we inherit, as our birthright.

We will select, then, for our present contemplation, a few particulars of our heritage, to which the occasion most obviously points our attention. And while we review the privileges of our descent from the pilgrims, we will glance at the duties they impose, as the only condition, on which we may hope still to enjoy and to transmit them.

Not least among these privileges I reckon the instructive history of the first fathers of New-England. Their history, we know, when recorded and given to the world, is the property of all, who choose to study it. But it is ours in an appropriate and peculiar sense, as it is the history of men, from

whom we are descended. And it is of so much more value and importance to us, than general history, as the records of a family are the more eagerly read, and more readily remembered and referred to for examples by the children of that family, than the annals of another, to which they are drawn by no attraction of kindred. While you have, perhaps, never had patience to go, even for once, through the narrative of obscure facts and absurd fictions relating to the first founders of illustrious nations, now no more, and have even dozed over the annals of the first planters of "the ancient dominion," you have often read or heard, with untiring repetition and unabated keenness of interest, every circumstance in the history of the persecuted pilgrims of Plymouth. In the narrow bigotry and cruelty of their persecutors, which exiled them from their homes, and eventually to this place, you have often admired the profound wisdom of God, which educes good from evil, and makes the malignant passions of men subservient to the accomplishment of the most beneficent ends. You have followed them with sympathy from their native fields. You have felt indignant at the perfidy, which repeatedly betrayed and harassed them in their escape to a land, where the rights of conscience were respected. You have there shared in the bitter regrets and pains of their hard "weaning from the delicate milk of their mother country." You have there, too, enjoyed with them their triumphant vindication from the slanders of their enemies, in the good name and affection, which their blameless and christian deportment won from the generous people, who received them into their city. You have there learned what should be a christian parent's chief solicitude for his offspring, from their just concern and parental fears for the morals and religion of their children, in a place

where the Sabbath was openly prophaned, and where they were exposed to the enticements and infection of vicious examples. You have seen these fears—cooperating with other laudable motives, and still attracted by that mysterious magnet, which attaches a virtuous people to their parent country, even when they are suffering from its injustice—determine them to quit their asylum at Leyden, and to brave the perils of the deep, and all the toils and privations of a new settlement in a distant wilderness. You have been impressed with reverence, and melted to tenderness at the unaffected dignity of mind, the cordial union and mutual affection of their little community, which mark their application to the king for permission to set down, with liberty of conscience, even upon the extreme verge of that circle, within whose limits they might still claim the name and privileges of Englishmen. You have been disgusted at the royal littleness of soul, which instead of public assurance of protection, gave them only private promise of connivance. You have felt the thrill of sublime emotion at their heroic intrepidity, in resolving, with such scant encouragement, to attempt their formidable enterprise. You have accompanied them, with awe, in their humble approaches, by fastings and prayers, to the invisible Source of all their fortitude and unshrinking energy of soul. You have bowed with them in their last united act of solemn humiliation before God, "to seek of him a right way for themselves, and for their little ones, and for all their substance." You have wept with these affectionate pilgrims, when, embracing for the last time, their beloved pastor and friends, who were to remain, they parted from them with prayers and many tears, committing themselves to the winds and waves, and the protection of him, whom these obey. You have given them your sympathy in the

discouragements of their tedious and expensive delays, and repeated returns into port after their voyage from England had commenced ; in their perils by sea, and in their joyful discovery of these shores. You have joined in their thanksgivings to God for their safety. You have assisted at their consultations, in forming their simple republic, the model, in theory, of that which has since grown out of our independence. You have recognized in this compact the great objects of their enterprize, and what should be the primary ends of all government, "the glory of God, and the advancement of the christian faith"—"the good order and preservation of the body politic."* You have accompanied the heads of this yet floating republic, with a curiosity and an interest, scarcely exceeded by theirs, in all their excursions along the desolate coast, in search of a place, where they might form "a city of habitation." You have exulted with them in their discovery of that quiet harbour, and this sheltered spot, on which they, and you, and the generations that sleep with them, have drank the portions allotted to each of bitter and of sweet in the cup of existence. You have paused with them, when first disembarked upon this spot, to contrast, for a moment, what they had come from, with what was before them. In the old world, with an ocean between, they had left country, kindred, home, the charms of their native fields, the scenes of their first loves, a land of conveniences and plenty. Before them, in the new, they beheld a wilderness, a winter of storms, the lurking savage with his shafts of death, a doubtful subsistence, certain toil and suffering, a prospect, which borrowed all the light it had from regions beyond the grave. You deemed it no distrust

* See this compact drawn up and signed on board the May-flower.

in them of the goodness of their covenant God, if then,

"Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon."

You have entered with them into their humble shelters from the inclement elements, and have there witnessed, with admiration and pity, the privations and hardships they endured, with the patience and fortitude of martyrs, "for conscience' sake." You have mourned with them the melancholy ravages, which a mortal sickness made in their little community. You have watched in Carver, Bradford, Winslow, and Standish, the developement and application of their characteristic and diverse resources, suited to the different exigences and emergences of their indigent and feeble commonwealth. You have, in short, pursued with emotions various as their trials, their labours, their talents, and their virtues, the career of these chief builders and defenders of the colony, who wisely and faithfully managed its temporal concerns, while the meek and truly apostolic Brewster, preached to them the words of eternal life—"allured" the whole "to brighter worlds, and led the way."

This history, then, is a valuable part of our inheritance. It is a treasure of interesting and instructive facts,—a repository of admirable lessons and examples. It merits a place in every family, and to be read and preserved with more scrupulous care than ever the proudest son of nobility guarded the records of his ancient lineage and titled descent. It is a proof of our descent, not, indeed, from men ennobled by the breath of kings, but from men, whose patent of nobility was derived from their Creator. We should preserve and teach it to our children for another reason; that it may serve for a memorial to us and them, as did the history of the patriarchs to their children, that God wrought such signal wonders for our fathers, that their posterity

after them, " might be a seed to seek and to serve him in all generations."*

As another, we trust, imperishable portion of our heritage from our fathers, we ought especially to notice their principles of religious and political liberty. Those, who have gone before me in this service, have so often and minutely detailed to you these principles, that a particular recital of them here would be a useless repetition. It is well known to my auditors, that these principles were the result of enlightened and correct views of their unalienable rights, as christians, and as men. In regard to religion, they maintained the grand Protestant principle in all its just consequences ; that the inspired scriptures are to be regarded as the only repository of revealed truth, as the sole standard of faith and practice,—that every man has a right to judge for himself of their meaning ;—that the imposition of human creeds and formularies is an assumption of authority not delegated by God to any man, or body of men ;—that all churches and members of churches are equal in respect of powers and privileges ; that all, who appear to believe in Christ and to obey him, are to be admitted to church privileges."† These were the leading fundamental principles, which they held upon this great subject. And where these are fully admitted in theory and practice, they form the best human guard and defence of the best gift of God to man, against those debasing alloys of human error and passion, those numberless abuses, superstitious inventions, and traditionary dogmas, which have so often rendered this heavenly gift an instrument of oppression, an engine of tyranny, a pretext for murder ;—this emanation of the divine love, a source of hatred,—

* See Note B.

† See Belknap's American Biography, Life of Robinson.

this religion of the Prince of peace, a torch of discord,—this light of the world, the patroness of ignorance,—this perfect law of liberty, the enslaver of the mind,—this comforter of the wretched, the artificer of human wo.

Their views of the doctrines of this religion, it is well known, were in accordance with the generally received opinions of the Protestants of that day. It is unnecessary to speak of these opinions here. It was not for the free enjoyment of these, that they exiled themselves to this wilderness. It was not on account of its doctrinal articles, that they dissented from the church of England, but of its discipline and its assumption and exercise of a power, which violated the rights of private judgment, and of conscience, and which was inconsistent with the great principles of christian liberty, above stated. And it was to maintain these principles, and to enjoy these rights, and not to perpetuate their doctrinal creed, that they suffered persecution, and sacrificed all their earthly interests and comforts.

They had so little of the spirit of infallibility, that they could even bear to be reminded by their enlightened, and, for the times, singularly catholic pastor, of the possible imperfections and errors of their creed. This eminent divine, and excellent man, had exhorted them not to imitate the Calvinists of their day, "who stick fast," says he, "where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things." And we may say of Robinson, and the chief pillars of his church, what he said of the two great champions of the reformation, Luther and Calvin; "they were burning and shining lights in their times. Yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God; and, were they now living, they would be as willing to embrace further light, as that which they first received." "They were persuaded, that it was not possible, the christian world

should have come so lately out of such thick anti-christian darkness, and that perfection of knowledge should break forth at once." And so far from imposing their peculiar views of the christian doctrines upon their posterity on pain of excommunication from the church of Christ, if they doubted a single point, as some of their posterity have since done to their brethren, they would, without question, were they now alive, exhort them, as did Mr. Robinson his church, to be as ready to receive any truth, made known by other instruments than the first reformers, as they had been to adopt the views of those illustrious men. "They were verily confident," if they believed with their pastor, "that the Lord had more truth to break forth out of his holy word." And they would lament the condition of not a few of our churches at the present day, when much of that expected truth has "broken forth," as did the prophetic Robinson that of the reformed churches of his time, "who remained at a stand in religion, and would go no farther than the first instruments of their reformation."*

Thus you see, my hearers, with how little reason we are referred, as we frequently are, to the sentiments of our fathers, as affording authority and sanction for abiding unalterably by the articles of their creed, for setting up the orthodoxy of their day, as an infallible standard of faith, to which every christian must conform, or be content to hear himself denounced, as a heretick, or an infidel. They came here as martyrs to the very principles, upon which we claim our right to dissent from any articles in any human creed, which, in our conscience, we believe to be equally at variance with the dictates of enlightened reason, and the general

* See Robinson's Farewell Address to the Pilgrims, when about to embark for America. Belknap's Amer. Biography, Vol. II. pp. 172—4.

tenor and plain declarations of scripture. If the practice of our fathers were sometimes at variance with these principles, it becomes not us, with our better information, to copy their imperfections, when they have left for our imitation, such bright examples of primitive piety and holy obedience. We ought rather to take warning to ourselves from their errors, and reproof from their virtues.

The rights of conscience, then, the principles of christian liberty, which were so dear to them, and maintained at such cost, constitute one of the noblest privileges of the heritage, that we have received from them. These rights and these principles we are bound to maintain by every obligation, not only of allegiance to Christ, our only head, but of gratitude to our fathers, and by all our regards to the interests of truth, and to the increase of knowledge, charity, peace and righteousness in the christian church. Till christians of different sentiments learn reciprocally to respect these principles and these rights, the church on earth will continue to be indeed a "*church militant;*" there will continue to be more religious dispute than practice, and essential duties will continue to be sacrificed for nonessential doctrines. Those, then, who encourage ecclesiastical associations and establishments, and advocate opinions, tending to subvert these principles, and encroach upon these rights, most certainly forfeit their claim of descent from the pilgrims of Plymouth.*

It may not be improper to remark here, that it is no violation, as some have said, of these principles and rights for a christian commonwealth to require by law that the people shall provide for the maintenance of public worship and religious instruction, so long as every one is at liberty to join himself to that denomi-

* See Note C.

nation, or church, which he prefers. Neither is it a violation of the principles of civil liberty maintained by our fathers. Although liberty of conscience, exemption from human authority and control in the concerns of religion, constituted the main motive and object of their enterprize, yet it appears that civil liberty, without which they well knew there could be no security for religious liberty, was duly appreciated, and well understood by them. From God and his word they derived the charter of their religious liberties, and while they held fast this in their right hand, when they fled from ecclesiastical oppression, they as firmly grasped in their left hand that of their civil rights, derived, as they believed, from the same source. Viewing all men, as equal by nature, and perfectly free of human control, until by voluntary association they mutually agree to surrender a part of their natural rights, in order to secure the rest by the united strength of the whole, and finding themselves virtually in this natural state by falling without the limits of their charter, they entered into a social compact upon these principles, each voluntarily subscribing to it with his own hand. "This," it has been formerly remarked in an eloquent address* on this occasion, "is perhaps the only instance, in human history, of that positive, original, social compact, which speculative philosophers have imagined as the only legitimate source of government." This instrument of voluntary association, by which they became a nation, furnishes undeniable proof that they had correct ideas of the rights of men,—that they had narrowly investigated the nature and principles of civil government; that they had even anticipated the light thrown upon this interesting subject, by the discussions, which were keenly agitated in Europe for

* By the Hon. John Q. Adams.

half a century after their arrival here,—that, next to religious, they valued political liberty, and were anxious to transmit them, indissolubly connected, to their latest posterity.

Their present descendants are sufficiently attached to the latter. We need no exhortations to inflame our love, or quicken our devotion to this goddess of our heart's idolatry. She is much more in danger of being consumed by our ardors, than of perishing the victim of our indifference.

Happy were it for us and for our land, if the Bible and the gospel of our salvation, inherited from our fathers, were rated by us, as truly according to their worth,—if they were regarded by all with equal warmth of attachment, and cherished with equal sensibility and zeal. Happy, indeed, it were for us, if we knew as well how to appreciate, and were as anxious to enjoy that moral "liberty, wherewith Christ makes free his faithful disciples," as we know how to prize and are solicitous to preserve our political liberty. Happy it were, too, if in our fond zeal for this liberty, we could always have discretion and judgment to distinguish between the reality and the name, between the true and the false, between that which our fathers approved, and that which they reprobated.

Let every citizen engrave upon his memory, and inculcate upon his children the maxims of a younger brother of the pilgrims upon this subject. "There is a liberty of corrupt nature, which is inconsistent with authority, impatient of restraint, the grand enemy of truth and peace, and all the ordinances of God are bent against it. But there is a civil, moral, federal liberty, which is the proper end and object of authority, a liberty for that only which is just and good. For this liberty you are to stand with your lives."*

* Governor Winthrop's Address to the General Court of Massachusetts.

As the fruit of these principles of the pilgrims, we recognize, with peculiar gratitude to them and their successors, the invaluable institutions, civil, literary, and religious, which, next to our hopes for eternity, constitute the crowning property and richest portion of our heritage. Our fathers early manifested a wise providence and benevolent concern for the present and future welfare of their posterity, by the establishment not only of churches, but of schools and colleges, those fountains of civilization, knowledge, learning and religion,—those candles of the Lord, which illumine and cheer the path of life, and light us through the darkness of the grave into the regions of eternal day. No plan, we conceive, has yet been devised, so well calculated to support religion, literature, and justice, as our laws relating to public worship, the support of the ministry, of schools, and courts of judicature. The institutions of our State in these respects are the result of the collected experience and wisdom of our fathers, and in our view by far the best of any other State in the Union. The chief merit of these institutions is due to the first emigrants, as he, who leads in an enterprize of great difficulty, and great utility in its results, is more deserving of the honor belonging to it, than those who follow, though he do little more than "serve," (as the pilgrims modestly said of themselves in another case) "for a stepping stone to others."

Their settlement here paved the way for the others, which shortly and successively followed; and we justly honor them as the layers of the broad foundation stone, on which has since risen the beautiful, spacious and magnificent fabric of our Commonwealth, in which are united in just proportion all the orders, suited to a republic, for strength and for ornament—religion, arts, letters, law,

impartial justice, equal rights, and equal security to all. While we exult in this edifice, as containing within its sacred precincts all that is most dear and valuable to man, we should remember that from its first state to the present, the vital spirit of piety and righteousness, fed by family discipline, family devotion, and the christian ordinances, has been to it, what the *Shechinah* was to the lowly tabernacle and splendid temple of the Jews, a token and pledge of the divine presence and protection. We should remember also, that the extinction of this spirit will be the signal of its destruction, as the temple in Jerusalem fell, at the moment in which the glory of the Lord departed from it.

This spirit, though far, we trust, from being extinct, has greatly decayed in these latter days. It is not with us, as it was with our fathers. They regarded religion to be, as it truly is, the chief concern of man. They prized the gospel above all price. They saw in it light to dispel the darkness of nature, medicine for the diseased mind, balm for the wounded heart, consolation for the afflicted, and hope for the desponding soul. They found it full of wise counsels for all, abounding with kind admonitions to the thoughtless, with unerring directions to the wandering, with solemn reproofs to the wicked, with soothing encouragements and animating promises to the penitent. They felt its motives to be most powerful to stimulate them to virtue, its ordinances admirably fitted to revive them, when languishing—to refresh them, when faint and weary—to strengthen their weak hands, and to confirm their feeble knees through all their painful pilgrimage. And best of all, it opened to them a bright vista to the skies,—revealed to them the path of life splendid with the glories of the heavenly world,—presented to their view, while they walked in faith through life, and most distinctly at the hour of death, the palm of victory, the

spotless robe of purity, the starry crown of immortality, and rivers of pleasure at God's right hand, as the rewards of their obedience and fidelity here.

No wonder, then, they were content to give up all that worldly men most value to enjoy this religion in peace—in the free and unrestrained observance of those ordinances and institutions, which they believed accorded most truly with the spirit, purity and simplicity of the everlasting gospel. Most sincere and ardent was their attachment to the means of grace. God's word was to them "the joy and rejoicing of their heart." The Sabbath was to them a delight, and they kept it holy. When too they partook of the memorials of their Saviour's death, their souls were refreshed, because they partook with faith. Retiring from this divine feast, they could say to one another, "we sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to our taste." In the early days of New-England, none were held in esteem, or promoted to office, but men of exemplary piety, who evinced their faith in Christ both by profession and the integrity of their lives. Men were not ashamed then, publickly to acknowledge their Redeemer. Even those of first rank and talents, deemed it their most honorable distinction to sit with their *humbler brethren* at the feet of Jesus. Men were then solicitous to learn their duty from the Bible, and consulted it daily, taught it to their children, and worhipped God in their families. Attention to religion and its ordinances formed a distinguishing feature in the character of the people at large.

You have doubtless anticipated me in deploring the melancholly contrast, which the present generation opposes to this character of our fathers. It is, indeed, striking, humiliating, and alarming. Let it therefore bring home to the conscience of every one, the admoni-

tion of the great Head of the church, to the declining churches of ancient times; "Remember, therefore, whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of thy place, except thou repent. Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, and are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God."

New-England has not only a rich heritage, but a high character at stake. We mean no invidious comparison of different States with one another. They are now one family, and there ought to be no jealousies or competitions among the members, but for the common good. But if we examine into the characters and objects of the original settlers of the several colonies, and compare with them their present posterity, we shall find that the latter partake somewhat of the spirit and habits of their ancestors, as rivers retain in their current the pure or discoloured waters of their sources, long after they have left them. The motives and objects of the first settlers of New-England were almost exclusively religious. It was not so with those of the other colonies. Their objects were all worldly and political. Accordingly, we find, in no other States, that public concern and legislative provision for the general support and maintenance of religious worship and instruction, which we still see in the two elder States of New-England. To these States, therefore, the religious world looks for an example and an influence, which shall render them the Zion of America, out of which the divine law shall go forth.

It must certainly be the ardent wish of every true friend to his country and to human improvement and happiness, to see our religious and school laws and institutions adopted and carried in-

to full operation and effect in every part of the Union, from the Atlantic to the Missisippi, from the lakes of the north to the Floridas. We are sensible, however, that if this is ever to be, the struggle must be hard and long, of light against darkness, of reason and truth against prejudice and error, of the spirit, in short, against the flesh. God only knows when, or whether at all this holy conflict shall be crowned with success. But if it may not succeed in this new experiment making in a new world, and the evil principle in human nature is yet to prevail over the good, to the destruction of our republic, as it has done to that of all others ;—if *pure religion* and *rational liberty*, instead of advancing towards the west, should be compelled to retreat before infidelity and licentiousness towards these shores, you, who here occupy the soil, and are the living representatives of the pilgrims, will, we trust, so far retain their spirit, and instil it into your children, that *these daughters of heaven*, shall here find their last, as they found their first asylum. And when they can no longer be induced to linger here, let them take their final flight from the rock on which they first alighted.

NOTES.

NOTE A.

It is a circumstance, which must afford great pleasure to those, who entertain a just respect for the memory of the Pilgrims, that one of the most interesting occurrences shortly after their arrival,—their first interview with the Sachem, Massassoiet,—has been chosen by Col. Sargent of Boston, as the subject of a picture, which has been conceived and executed in a style, that does equal credit to the powers of his imagination, and his skill, as an artist. It is grateful to our patriotic feelings to observe one of the most enchanting of the arts making progress in our country—always a sure proof of the progress of taste and intellectual refinement—and that we have an artist, who does not disdain to adorn his native country with the labours of his pencil, and who does not think the history of that country unworthy to furnish him with a subject.

Our country has produced several celebrated painters; but as soon as a young man has risen to any promising grade of eminence in his art, he hurries over to England, who naturalizes the artist, and thus claims as her own the productions and the glory of his genius. Which is most in fault, the artist who forsakes his native country, or his country who fails to cherish and patronize her son?

"Crudelis mater magis, an puer improbus ille?" Vir. El. 8. 49.

It has been suggested that the proper place for the picture of Mr. Sargent, is in Plymouth,—that it ought to be purchased of him, and a suitable building provided in that ancient and respectable town, in which it may be fixed for the inspection of visitors, as a durable monument of the event, which forms its subject, and of the genius of its author. It would gratify many sons of the pilgrims, to see measures taking to carry this suggestion into effect.

NOTE B.

To those who may wish to furnish themselves with a minute and full historical account of the pilgrims, and of the Plymouth colony and church, down to the present period, we would recommend the "New-England Memorial," recently republished, with notes and an ample appendix, by the Hon. Judge Davis, of Boston. From the peculiar opportunities of that gentleman, being a native of Plymouth, and having been long a resident there, and from the known interest, ability, and care with which his researches have been prosecuted, the reader may confidently expect to find, in this publication, the most complete and satisfactory information, relative to the first settlers of the Old Colony, and its subsequent history, that, in all probability, will ever be obtained.

NOTE C.

The people at large ought to be distinctly informed, if possible, that the controversy, at present in agitation between the two classes of clergymen in this State, under the different names of liberal and orthodox, is virtually no other than a contest on the

one part, in support of the very principles and rights, asserted and maintained by the first fathers of New-England, and on the other, in opposition to them. Our puritan fathers, like consistent Protestants, contended for the right of interpreting the scriptures for themselves, equally in regard to matters of discipline and forms of worship, as to doctrines. "But no," said his orthodox majesty and grace, king James and archbishop Bancroft, "having taken into our most gracious keeping the infallibility of his holiness, the pope, which he has forfeited by his abuses, we are determined in conjunction and cooperation with all our loyal subjects and orthodox children of our reformed and holy mother church, that you shall conform to our interpretations of scripture in respect to all matters of faith and worship, as set forth in our most wholesome and only true and unerring exposition of the oracles of truth, the liturgy and articles of our said reformed and holy mother church: if you refuse, we will deny you the name and privileges of christians, and will persecute you with fines and imprisonments, and such other charitable penalties, as may most effectually bring you to the saving acknowledgment of the truth, &c. &c."

The liberal clergy and laymen of this State, having inquired, and consulted the scriptures for themselves, and conscientiously come to conclusions, and formed opinions, differing, in some points, from the creed of their orthodox brethren, the latter, with an assumption of infallibility, like that of his majesty, and his grace, the king and bishop, say to the former, "you must renounce your errors, and conform to our orthodox and unerring interpretations of scripture, and statements of the christian doctrines, or we will proclaim you to all true believers, that is, all who believe with us, for heretics, if not infidels; and until such time as you shall make a formal recantation of your damnable heresies, we shall not cease, as we are in duty bound, to cry aloud and warn our yet untainted brethren to come out from among such pestilent corrupters of the truth, and to hold no communion or christian intercourse with you. It is true, we have no ecclesiastico-civil tribunal in this State, (the more's the pity,) no "high commission court," or grand consociation, before which to arraign and try offenders against orthodoxy; but we can at least denounce you before the publick, exclude you from our christian fellowship, and expose you to the odium or suspicions of a large portion of the christian community. All this we will do for true disinterested charity's sake"—ex. gr. see Panoplist Review, and Dr. Worcester's letters—"to the endangered souls of our brethren, and to preserve inviolate the true faith once delivered to Dr's. Calvin, Hopkins, and others."

It happens very happily for the liberal, or Unitarian portion of the clergy and people of this Commonwealth, that they do not form so small and feeble a minority, as did the persecuted dissenters in England. Were it otherwise, we see full well what would be their doom, in that of some of their brethren, who have had the honest temerity to declare openly any new views, they may have received, of doc-

trinal points, differing from the established creeds of the orthodox associations or churches, of which they were members.

Although it must ever be a painful spectacle to a sincere disciple of the Prince of peace, to witness any strife among christian brethren, other than who shall contribute most to promote christian knowledge, piety, and charity in their respective societies, and in the community, yet it must be the wish of every friend to free inquiry and pure christianity, to see the old Protestant principle with all its just inferences, kept fairly and steadily before the publick, and fully contested, till it is decided, as soon or late it must be, by general consent, (and this is the only way to quiet the present controversy, and others akin to it,) that the Bible shall be the only standard of christian faith; that every christian, taking that for his guide, shall be free to judge for himself of the meaning of its contents; that subscription to the interpretations of no man, or body of men, shall be made a term of admission to christian ordinances, or be required of students in theology, of candidates for approbation to preach, or for ordination to the pastoral office. Let these rational principles of christian liberty be practically admitted on all sides, and, as a necessary consequence, let there be required no other tests of christian discipleship and character, than those given by Jesus Christ,—"by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another—ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you—by their fruits shall ye know them"—and there would soon be heard greetings of peace, and affectionate fellowship, where the ear is now pained with sounds of discord and denunciation. There would soon be seen, at least, more unity of affection, if not of sentiment, among christian brethren, who are now estranged from each other. The pious Unitarian and Trinitarian, Calvinist and Arminian, and the rest, would amicably agree to differ and to love one another. They would compare together, in the spirit of candor, and "with meekness of wisdom," their differences, and be surprised to find them so few and unessential. They would weigh fairly together each other's arguments, and would inquire together impartially at each other's different sources of information. The Bible would be more studied without reference to long established systems and creeds of man's device. Light would be increased, error detected and abjured; prejudices would vanish, intolerance and censoriousness fall into disuse; christian ministers and churches would "abound more and more in love, in all knowledge and judgment, approving the things which are excellent, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."

Such a time, such a state of the church will come. God grant, that, as we hope, among ourselves it may not be distant.

FINIS.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED DEC. 31, 1820.

THE LAST LORD'S DAY IN THE

SECOND CENTURY

SINCE OUR FOREFATHERS FIRST SETTLED

IN PLYMOUTH.

BY NATHANAEL EMMONS, D. D.
Pastor of the Church in Franklin.

DEDHAM:
PRINTED BY H. & W. H. MANN.
1821.

Rec. Geo Bancroft
May 16. 1865

A CENTURY SERMON.

II SAMUEL, vii. 23.

And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things, and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

IT is the character of good men to be wise and attentive observers of divine providence. They eye the hand and heart of God in public as well as in private favours. David having just been reflecting on the signal blessings, which God had bestowed upon himself, and which he had promised to bestow upon his posterity, was naturally led to contemplate and admire the more important and distinguishing blessings, which he had from the beginning bestowed upon his nation and kingdom. He was deeply impressed with a grateful sense of God's extraordinary and discriminating goodness to them, in their origin, destination, and their present national prosperity. He devoutly appeals to God, whether he had not done greater and better things for his people Israel,

than for any other nation in the world. "What one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things, and terrible for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods." This concise and comprehensive representation of God's discriminating goodness to Israel is fully confirmed, by the inspired writers, who have given a particular history of the divine conduct towards that highly favoured people. They assure us, that God raised them up from the pure stock of Abraham, delivered them from their cruel bondage in Egypt, led them safely through the dangers of the wilderness, drove out the idolatrous nations to make room for them in the land of promise, where he raised them to an extraordinary height of national prosperity. And here it is not too much to say, that God has treated us with similar marks of his discriminating goodness, through every period of our national existence. To make this appear, and to deduce the proper inferences from it, is the leading object of the present discourse.

I shall pass over the favours, which are common to us and to mankind in general, and take notice of those only, by which we have been highly distinguished among the nations of the earth.

1. Here it occurs, in the first place, that God raised us up from pious and excellent Ancestors. Almost every other nation has risen from a base and degenerate origin. The ancient Romans sprang from a mean and spurious brood of plunderers. The present European nations were generally, if not universally, founded in ignorance, superstition, and idolatry.

But our nation, like the peculiar people of God, was planted a *choice vine*. Our Forefathers, instead of being the off-scouring of all things, were men of whom the world was not worthy. They were the glory and ornament of the land from whence they came. Those, who first came here with desires and hopes of making great fortunes, were completely disappointed and defeated in their designs. But when others, who were moved by the higher motives of religion, attempted to plant a nation of Christians in this land of Pagan darkness and idolatry, the hand of providence guided all their movements, and crowned their noble enterprize with desired success. The fathers of our nation possessed every thing great and excellent in the eyes of the world, except riches and honours, which they freely sacrificed for the attainment of more noble and important objects. They were men of courage and magnanimity; otherwise they would not have engaged in such a great and hazardous undertaking. They were men of virtue and piety; otherwise they would not have given up all their worldly possessions and enjoyments for the sake of religion. They were also men of superiour knowledge, wisdom, and sagacity, and well established in some of the best principles both of religion and government; otherwise they could not have devised and adopted so many wise and useful Institutions in their infant state. These principles many of them had acquired by deep erudition, as well as by long observation and experience. They had felt the weight of both civil and religious oppression. They had been denied the common rights of humanity and religion. This led them to examine these subjects with attention and accuracy. The result was a clear conviction of the truth and

importance of the pure principles which they brought with them here, and upon which they uniformly acted in all their public and private concerns, whether of a civil or religious nature. These principles appeared to them in such an important light, that they made the best provision in their power, to transmit them pure and uncorrupt to their remotest posterity. Such a choice vine, planted in a new and rich soil, could not fail of producing excellent fruit. It has been the peculiar privilege and glory of our nation, as it was of the people of Israel, that when our progenitors went after God in the wilderness, in a land not sown, they were holiness unto the Lord, and the first fruits of his increase. We are now sharing largely in the happy effects of their wisdom, virtue, piety, and paternal affection. What one nation now on earth can trace their origin to such a pure and excellent source!

2. It is a great and distinguishing favour, that God has given us so much liberty, and so many opportunities, of forming our own civil and religious Institutions. Civil and religious institutions in all countries, except Judea, have generally been owing to *chance*, or *violence*. The notion of an original *compact* between rulers and subjects, upon which some theories of government have been built, appears to be altogether visionary and unfounded. The truth is, nations have commonly come together by chance, and united by chance, without any explicit compact between the governors and the governed. And where any people have not formed their civil and religious institutions in this way, they have received their laws and religion from their conquerors. This has been the case with respect to the ancient nations of Europe,

Asia, and Africa. Their civil and religious institutions have been formed, overturned, and new-formed, by those who from time to time gained an absolute and arbitrary dominion over them. Rome *heathen*, and Rome *christian* have had a hand in almost every civil and religious establishment in three quarters of the globe. Rome heathen, before the rise of the Pope, was often very indulgent to the laws and religions of their conquered countries. But after Rome became christian, her bishops rapidly gained both civil and ecclesiastical power, until the Pope usurped an absolute civil and ecclesiastical Supremacy over a greater part of the churches and governments of the christian world, who have not thoroughly purged themselves from all his false doctrines, absurd ceremonies, and tyrannical influence, to this day. It is a great and distinguishing favour, that God has given us from the beginning full liberty and fair opportunities of forming our own civil and religious institutions. When our forefathers fled from the reach and influence of their cruel persecutors, they found themselves at perfect liberty to choose their own forms of religion and government. Accordingly, they assumed their own rights and exercised their own choice. They had none to fear or to please but themselves, in their civil and religious concerns. Every one had his *voice*, though not perhaps his *choice*, in all public transactions. They employed the liberty and opportunity they enjoyed, in devising and adopting just such a government as they considered the best; and agreed in just such religious principles and modes of worship as they supposed to be most agreeable to the word of God. They enacted their own laws, and elected their own rulers. They established their own

terms of admission into the church, and their own order of ecclesiastical discipline. They chose their own religious teachers, and fixed the modes and ceremonies in the administration of christian ordinances. All these things they did, as soon as they resolved upon a permanent settlement in this country. In about a century and half after that period, we had another opportunity of revising, altering, and new-modeling our civil constitutions. In that state of national maturity, we employed all our learning, wisdom, and experience in framing a civil constitution, which we deemed the best we could form, for such a people as ourselves. And in matters of religion, we left every one, where he ought to be left, in the exercise of his own reason and conscience, without the least restraint, or compulsion. Religion and government must be allowed to be the greatest of all national concerns; and to enjoy complete liberty in respect to these important objects, is to enjoy the greatest civil and religious freedom, that any nation can possibly possess. And in this respect, what nation is there now on earth, whom God has so highly favoured and distinguished as these American States?

3. God has remarkably smiled upon us, in respect to our growth, protection, and outward prosperity. The increase of our numbers has been rapid beyond example. "Health has usually existed here, in a degree, not often equalled, and perhaps never exceeded. In some towns it appears, by long continued registers of births and deaths, that one out of four and one out of five, extensively one out of six, and generally one out of seven, of those who are born, live to seventy years of age; and half of those who are born, live to twenty years." This longevity, to whatever

causes it may be ascribed, whether the salubrity of our climates, the industry of our people, or their frugal and temperate modes of living, has greatly contributed to increase our population. "In the year 1700, there were one hundred and fifteen incorporated towns in New-England, and probably about 80,000 inhabitants. There are now about eight hundred and sixty towns, and probably 1,200,000 people." Such a vast increase of population in the last hundred years, notwithstanding the multitudes that have been slain and perished in the cruel and bloody wars, which have followed one another, in the course of forty or fifty years past, is a signal display of divine goodness towards us. But the increase of our numbers is but a small thing, in comparison with the many signal instances of divine mercy towards us, in times of darkness and deep distress. We have always, till very lately, been imminently exposed to national dangers. But God has carried us, as on eagles' wings, through every period of our national existence. When our forefathers first reached these then inhospitable shores, they were exposed to the severest sufferings from an inclement season, a savage enemy, a threatening famine, and a raging pestilence. But amidst all these dangers, He in whom they trusted, provided a place of habitation, awakened the pity or alarmed the fears of the savages, and prevented their utter extinction. The remnant that survived gradually multiplied, and soon began to penetrate further and further into the country, to settle towns, to plant churches, and to form several separate and large colonies, notwithstanding the wilderness was full of subtile enemies, who were continually plotting to molest and destroy them. Yet God

caused their enemies gradually to retire or flee before them; or else gave them power to restrain or subdue them. Divine providence wonderfully preserved and supported them amidst these fiery trials and ardent struggles for about one hundred and fifty years. These wars with the natives of the country had hardly ceased, before France exerted her power and long practised policy, to bring us under her control and dominion, by erecting a chain of forts on our northern and western frontiers, which brought on a bloody and expensive war. But God graciously supported and succeeded us in that dangerous conflict. We then fondly anticipated long peace and security. But in a few years, we were awakened from our pleasing dreams by our parent country, who employed all their skill, power, and wealth, to subject us to a state of abject subordination and bondage. The combat was very long, cruel, and in all respects distressing, but happily terminated in our complete freedom and independence. I pass over without a single remark on the origin and issue of our last contest with that nation. Such have been the special interpositions of providence in our favour, in the times of our greatest dangers and calamities. What nation is there in the earth, who have been so wonderfully protected and preserved as we have been, through the long period of two hundred years! We as well as Israel may say, "Had not the Lord been on our side, when men rose up against us, we had been swallowed up, and the waters had overwhelmed us." These extraordinary preservations have been attended and followed by a national prosperity no less extraordinary. For nearly forty years, wealth has been poured in upon us, like the waves of the sea; which has disposed and

enabled us, to make great and rapid improvements "in literature, civilization, and every thing which can ameliate the state of man. At the commencement of the last century, there was but one college completely founded in New-England. Now there are six. In all the colonies, now states, south of Connecticut, there was then but one college, and now there are fifteen or sixteen." If we look over the world, where shall we find a spot on the face of the earth, where the inhabitants have been so rapidly increased, so signally preserved, and so highly prospered, as the people of America? We ought still further to reflect,

"4. That God has graciously distinguished us by *spiritual*, as well as *temporal* prosperity. The first ministers, whom God disposed to visit and settle in this country, were generally men of great learning, great talents, and eminent piety. They were equal, in all these respects, to the best of their brethren, whom they left behind in the ministry. They were profound theologians. They understood the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, and taught them with great plainness and pungency. They formed and regulated churches according to the apostolic pattern. Many were turned from darkness to light by their faithful instructions and labours. The greater part of the people in general, for a considerable time, were *professors* of religion, and apparently *pious*. They lived like pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and declared *by their conduct*, that they sought a country better than that they had left, or that they had found. As their descendants spread over a wider and wider extent of country, they lost some of their religious advantages, and gradually declined in the correctness of their sentiments and strictness of

their practice. But they continued to maintain the character of a virtuous and pious people, during the first century to the beginning of the second, when revivals of religion became more frequent. In 1733, there was an unusual seriousness and attention to religion in several places in New-England. After this, in 1741, there was a much more general and powerful effusion of the Divine Spirit through the country, which produced the happiest effects. Among these, one was, that it led some of the divines in New-England more thoroughly to investigate, more clearly to understand, and more plainly to teach the pure and distinguishing doctrines of the gospel. Besides that great revival, there have been almost every year since, particular revivals in particular churches and congregations, which have kept religion generally in a flourishing state. This religious prosperity is more worthy of a grateful notice, because it has been granted while religious errours and declensions were visibly appearing among both ministers and people. Within this thirty years, Errorists have abounded. Some have denied the inspiration of the Scriptures. Some have denied that system of religious sentiments, which was believed and taught by our forefathers. And some have broached doctrines too novel, too unscriptural, and visionary to be mentioned. But God has gloriously triumphed over the united zeal and exertions of bold and presumptuous corrupters. Some have been brought to renounce their errours, comply with the terms of the gospel, and enlist under the banner of Christ; while others have been constrained to retreat in silence before the united exertions of the friends of truth, to detect and refute their absurd and dangerous sentiments. This has been God's usual

conduct towards us. Whenever the enemy has appeared to be coming in upon us, he has raised up a standard against him. He has blessed our churches and religious societies with pastors and teachers after his own heart, who have fed them with knowledge and understanding, and who have been the happy instruments of forming a peculiar people for his name, amidst the nations and the gods of America.

I shall conclude this interesting subject, with some pertinent and useful remarks.

The first remark that occurs is, that God has done more for us, on the whole, to make us a holy and happy people, than he has done for any other people in the world. Every people enjoy some peculiar privileges or advantages. Some enjoy a more temperate climate, a more salubrious air, a more rich and fertile soil. Some are adorned with richer apparel, and taste more delicious fruits. Some are able to exhibit larger cities, more beautiful gardens, more superb palaces, more elegant sculptures and paintings, and some to live in greater ease, affluence and splendor. But what are all these things, in point of real worth and importance, compared with the distinguishing blessings we enjoy? Knowledge, liberty, and religion, are worth more than all the mines, and pearls, and plants, and fruits, to be found in the bowels, or on the surface of the earth, if we regard only the present life. And if we regard the life to come, our civil and religious privileges are infinitely more valuable, than those of the oldest, the richest, and greatest nation on the globe. Who that has any proper sense of the worth of the soul, and the blessings of a happy immortality, would wish that any child of his should be educated, live, and die in Britain, in France,

in Spain, in Germany, in Persia, in China, or Peru? Is there a more favourable spot on the earth than America, in respect to temporal and spiritual privileges? Could we have our choice, could we find a place better adapted to make us holy and happy in this life and in that which is to come? The inhabitants of New-England enjoy complete civil and religious freedom, the best means of gaining every species of useful knowledge, the best opportunities of receiving religious instruction, and the best advantages of living a useful and happy life. And what more can we desire, that God should do for us, as rational, immortal, and accountable creatures?

In the next place, we ought to reflect, that since God has done so much for us, we have much to do for him. He does not raise up a people, and grant them peculiar favours, for nothing. He has some important purposes for them to promote. When he raised up the children of Israel, and redeemed them from Egypt, and the nations, and their gods, he intended to form a people for himself, who should be the instruments of promoting his honour and interest in the world. As he did more for *them*, than any other people; so they had more to do for *Him*, than any other people. They had to keep his sacred oracles; to preserve the true religion; and diffuse the knowledge of his Being and Perfections through the earth. They had to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah, and to spread the gospel of Christ among those who had never enjoyed their great and distinguishing privileges. These great and important purposes they fully answered, before they were disinherited and scattered over the face of the earth. And no doubt God has given us this goodly heritage, and

granted us so many rich and peculiar privileges, to answer some important designs of providence. Though he intends that all other nations shall glorify him, yet they may glorify him in one way, and we in another. They may glorify him, by pulling down the kingdom of Satan; and we by building up the kingdom of Christ. They may be objects upon which to display his *justice*, and we the objects upon which to display his *mercy*. They may be the *occasion*, and we the *cause* of enlarging, purifying, and adorning the christian Church. Both the word and providence of God lead us to expect, that the errours and delusions of Pagans, Papists, Jews, and Mahometans, are soon to be destroyed. But these errours and delusions are so riveted in the minds, and so connected with the manners and politicks of the nations where they prevail, that they will sooner give up their *lives*, than their *false religions*. Of course, the destruction of their errours must prove the destruction of themselves. It must be supposed, therefore, that in less than two hundred years, great revolutions and desolations will spread over the antichristian nations and their gods. But as we know, that the gates of hell shall not ultimately prevail against the Church; so we may confidently expect, that it will actually flourish in one part of the world, if it be obstructed, or extinguished in another. The falling of other kingdoms will be the rising of the kingdom of Christ. And since the true religion has, for a long time, been spreading from the East to the West, there is reason to believe, that God has much for us to do for him, in carrying into execution the purposes of his grace, in building up Zion, in this large quarter of the globe.

It must be remarked, in the first place, and the remark ought to make a deep impression on every mind, that our great and peculiar privileges of a civil and religious nature, have greatly aggravated the guilt of our national declensions in virtue and piety. God told his ancient people, that they were *bent to backsliding*, notwithstanding he had bound them to obedience, by the strongest and most endearing motives; which extremely aggravated their national guilt. He highly resented and sharply reproved their numerous and aggravated transgressions. "Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah! sinful nation; a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward." As we have been distinguished with divine favours like Israel, so our sins are aggravated like theirs. We have sinned not only against the giver of all our mercies, but against the examples, the labours, the sufferings of our forefathers, and the benevolent exertions and costly sacrifices of thousands of our cotemporaries. All our possessions, privileges and advantages, have been dearly purchased. They are the fruits of the privations, perils, blood, and treasure of many generations. These circumstances are peculiar aggravations of our disobedient and rebellious conduct towards our God, and the God of our fathers.

In particular, our ingratitude for the bounties of

providence, is a sin of the deepest die. The Heathens are accused of ingratitude; but what is the criminality of their ingratitude in comparison with ours. They know not from whence their blessings come; but we know that every good gift and every perfect gift comes from the Father of mercies. They know not, as we do, the worth of the blessings they enjoy. They are ignorant, but we are not, of the solemn account to be given of the use that is made of the favours, which God bestows upon his sinful and ill-deserving creatures. They are ungrateful to an unknown God, but we are ungrateful to a known Creator and Benefactor, which extremely aggravates our baseness and guilt.

The disbelief of the existence of God, and the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures, is far more criminal in this enlightened land, than in any other part of the world. Atheists and Deists have long existed, and propagated their absurd and destructive opinions, in various christian countries; but such Infidels are of recent rise in New-England. They have not presumed to avow their corrupt and demoralizing sentiments till very lately, because they knew, that the great majority of the people here, had been early taught to believe the Being and perfections of the Deity, and the truth and divinity of his Holy Word. And had it not been for the astonishing spread of infidelity in Europe, infidels would still have been very scarce among us. But now they are numerous, and their profane and vain babblings diffuse the poison of errour and ungodliness far and wide, which eats as a canker the hearts of the learned and unlearned. Our infidelity bears the black mark, and contains the aggravated guilt of *Apostacy*.

The gross Heresies, which have crept into our churches and religious societies, are extremely crimi-

nal and offensive to God, who has favoured us with better means and opportunities for religious instruction, than he has granted to any other people. Our fathers maintained able and faithful ministers to teach and inculcate the peculiar doctrines of grace. They constantly attended the public worship of God in his house, and daily read his Word in their families. They brought up their children and households in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and obliged them to remember the sabbath-day and keep it holy. Neither the young nor the old, had any opportunity or peculiar temptation to imbibe gross and dangerous errours. These virtuous and religious habits were transmitted from generation to generation, for nearly an hundred and fifty years. Nor are they entirely erased from the minds of many to the present day. But amidst all the light and love which God has manifested to us, many of the peculiar and important doctrines of the gospel have been misunderstood, perverted, and totally denied. And both the perverters and perverted have contracted aggravated guilt, and have a solemn account to give for departing from the faith once delivered to the saints, and firmly believed and plainly taught by their pious forefathers

The neglect and contempt of divine ordinances, are more criminal in us, than in any other people. God has always given us full liberty to worship him in public and private, agreeably to the dictates of our own consciences. He has every sabbath, and at other times, opened the door of his house to us, and invited and commanded us to enter in; but how many refuse or neglect to tread his courts. "The ways of Zion mourn, because few come to her solemn feasts!" How many in our larger and smaller towns, deny the sanctity and pervert the design of the holy sabbath;

and instead of attending the worship of God, and the ordinances of the gospel on that day, spend it in idleness, or some other way, more agreeable to their corrupt hearts. These are sins directly pointed against God, and are sad marks of our deep declension and aggravated guilt.

Prodigality has arisen to an exorbitant height among this young and half-grown people. Europeans have remarked our egregious folly and guilt, in running into this most impoverishing and demoralizing vice, which has ruined so many great and opulent nations. We have nearly exhausted our pecuniary resources, by purchasing foreign fineries and luxuries; which have led us to renounce our industry for indolence, and our republican virtues for every species of vice and impiety. These deplorable effects of our prodigality mark our base degeneracy in the view of the world, and our aggravated guilt in the sight of God.

But this subject, on this day, leads us to remark, in the last place, that we owe an immense debt of gratitude to God, for raising us up from a very small beginning, and forming us into a large, mighty, and flourishing nation. The close of this day is the close of this year, and the close of this year is the close of the *Second Century*, since our Forefathers first planted a Christian Church in this uncivilized and unchristianized country. Mr. Prince of Boston, Mr. Dexter of Dedham, and Dr. Holmes of Cambridge tell us, that our pious ancestors kept their first Sabbath in Plymouth, on the thirty-first day of December, 1720. Why the twenty-second, rather than the thirty-first day of the month, has been so long celebrated as the *Era* of our national existence, I do not learn from our best Chronologists. But this, howev-

er, seems to be the most proper day to commemorate the birth of our nation, and recognize the wonders of divine goodness towards us, from our infant to our present state. We are infinitely indebted to God for the great things, and terrible, which he has done for us, to make us a pious, virtuous, and happy people. Our gratitude and obedience ought to correspond to the number, variety, and vast value of the blessings which he has lavished upon us. This indispensable duty Christ beautifully illustrated in the parable of the talents. Those who received them were expressly required to occupy and improve them in the service of their benefactor; and he that neglected to feel and fulfil his obligations of gratitude and obedience, was severely reproved and condemned. God solemnly reminded his people, whom he had most highly favoured, what dutiful and grateful returns he had expected from them. Speaking to them by the prophet under the similitude of a vineyard, he demands, "What could have been done more in my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes." God justly expected, that his people should have been peculiarly grateful and obedient, because he had been peculiarly kind and beneficent. And he may justly expect more love and obedience from us, than from any people, on whom he has not bestowed such singular privileges, advantages, and opportunities of promoting his glory, and our own temporal and eternal interests. He may justly expect, that his Churches here should be more pure and uncorrupt, than other Churches; that his Ministers here should be more pious, more orthodox, more laborious, and more faithful than other Ministers; that his Rulers here should be more wise, more just, and

more devoted to the public good, than other Rulers; that his People here should be more religious, more industrious, more obedient, more temperate, and more peaceable, than any other Christian People. In a word, he may justly expect, that the great and numerous blessings by which he has distinguished us, should inspire us with an ardent zeal to promote the important purposes, for which he has raised us up a people to himself. God is opening to our view such future scenes and objects, as ought to encourage and animate us to employ all the means in our power, to build up the nation in every thing that is great and good. If God should continue to favour us in time to come, as he has done in time past, the next century may raise us to an elevated rank among the greatest nations on earth. It is supposed, that we have usually doubled our numbers once in every twenty-five years; and should we continue to increase in this ratio through the next century, it has been calculated, that at the close of it we shall amount to ninety-six millions of people. God has brought us into a broad place, where he can not only raise up and support such a great and mighty nation, but employ them all as instruments of promoting his glory, and the happiness of this miserable world. And as our progenitors have been the instruments of raising us up to our present high and happy state, so it properly devolves upon us, as a grateful and indispensable duty, to employ all our civil, religious, and literary advantages in promoting the civil, religious, and literary interests of this rising empire. A very extensive field of labour lies before us; and though it affords promising prospects, yet these prospects may often be involved in the dark clouds of public calamities and severe trials. This has been the course of divine providence

towards us hitherto, and therefore we may expect, that we have not only much to do, but much to suffer, in preserving our liberties both civil and religious, and in extending our borders to the western ocean, through a vast wilderness filled with savages, who are supported in their depredations upon us, by those who are inimical to them as well as to us. To civilize those who need to be civilized; to gospelize those who need to be gospelized; to instruct those who need to be instructed; to reform those who need to be reformed; and to restrain those who need to be restrained in this growing and widely extended nation, will require all the wisdom of the wise, all the virtue of the virtuous, and all the courage, zeal, and benevolence of the pious. You rejoice, and have reason to rejoice in the present prosperity of the nation; but you have reason to rejoice with trembling, when you reflect, that the continuance and increase of their future prosperity, depends so much upon the short-sighted wisdom, feeble virtue, and feebler piety of those, who are now on the stage of action. Great zeal and benevolence have been displayed and are still displayed, in sending the gospel and the preachers of the gospel to the ignorant and uncivilized savages on our borders. But there is a stronger inclination in the selfish and avaricious to destroy, than to protect, enlighten, and save those poor, perishing Pagans. And all such persons will do more to counteract and obstruct, than to promote our benevolent exertions.

We have the same kind of difficulties and obstacles to meet and surmount, in order to christianize America, that our forefathers had to meet and surmount, when they first fixed ther residence among the nations and their gods in this country. They were pious and

patriotic; they loved their own country, and determined to promote its *spiritual* as well as *temporal* prosperity. And they were wise and good to labour in the field where God had destined them to labour. This country is the proper field for our principal labours and benevolent exertions, to promote the cause of Christ and the salvation of our fellow-men. If religion be essentially necessary to promote and secure the blessings of civil government and civil society, as our wisest statesmen tell us, then it is our imperious duty, to diffuse the knowledge and spirit of the gospel as far as possible through the United States, in order to secure and promote our highest temporal as well as spiritual interests. These are interests which God undoubtedly intended to promote, by giving us a national existence; and by the great and peculiar privileges and blessings which he has already conferred upon us. What he has done for us, is a presage of what he still intends to do for us in future. We have good grounds to place an unshaken confidence in his wisdom, power, and goodness. The prayers of our pious ancestors and of their pious posterity, have entered into the ears of Him, who is able and ready to answer them. The burden of their fervent petitions has been for the temporal and spiritual prosperity of America. They have availed much, and will avail much to draw down future blessings upon this favorite land. We have the same encouragement to trust in God, that they had, and are bound by the same obligations to do it. But our trust must be accompanied with our best efforts, to make this people both holy and happy. All our national interests are now lodged in our hands, and it depends upon us, whether we will maintain or destroy them. If we are faithful to God, to ourselves, and to our pos-

terity, God will never leave nor forsake us; nor suffer us to leave and forsake him.

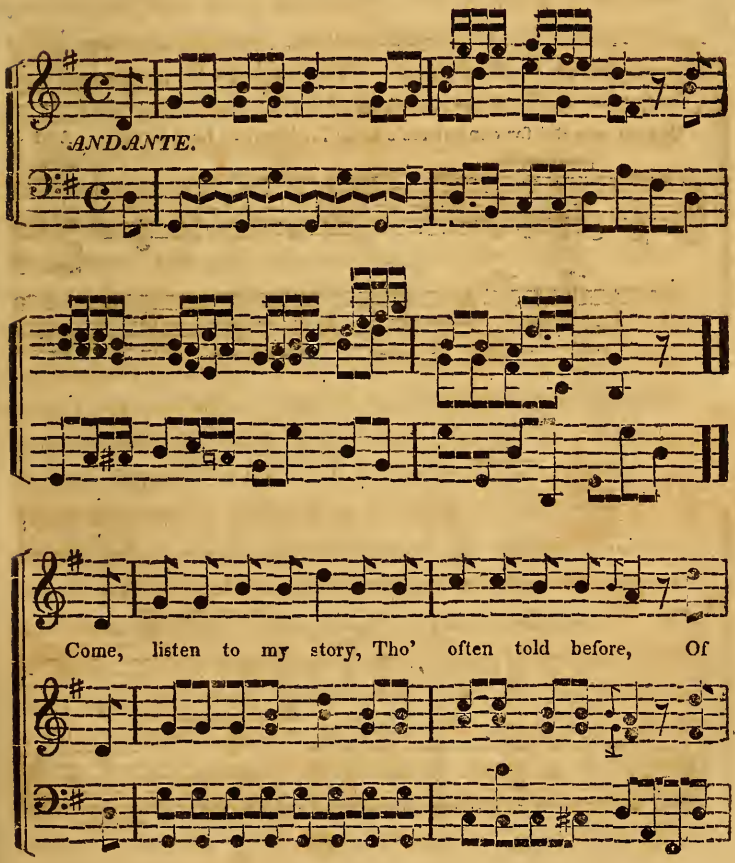
We have lived to see what none of us will ever live to see again—the *Close of a Century.* To-morrow we may see the *beginning of a new century;* but we have no ground to expect to see the *end* of it Before that period arrives, we shall all follow one another into that world, from whence we shall never return. In the course of the current year, there have been nineteen Deaths among this people. We shall not soon forget those who were near and dear to us. Though one century be just as long as another; not so are the lives of men. The grave is without any order. Let no man boast of to-morrow, for he knoweth not what a day, and much less what a year, or a century may bring forth. What vast numbers of mankind has the last hundred years carried to their long home; and how many will the next sweep off from the face of the earth; how many more will live and die, before that *Great Day* shall come, when the whole human race will find their final and unchangeable condition! We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, where we shall be deeply and eternally interested in the decisions of that Supreme Judge. The celebration of the last century of time, will be a joyful festival to some, but a day of darkness and hopeless destruction to others. If any have the witness in themselves, that they are prepared to meet their Judge in peace, let them rejoice; but if any are conscious to themselves, that they are not prepared; let them mourn, repent, and return to God upon the gracious terms of the gospel, before their day of grace expires, and their feet stumble upon the dark mountains of death.

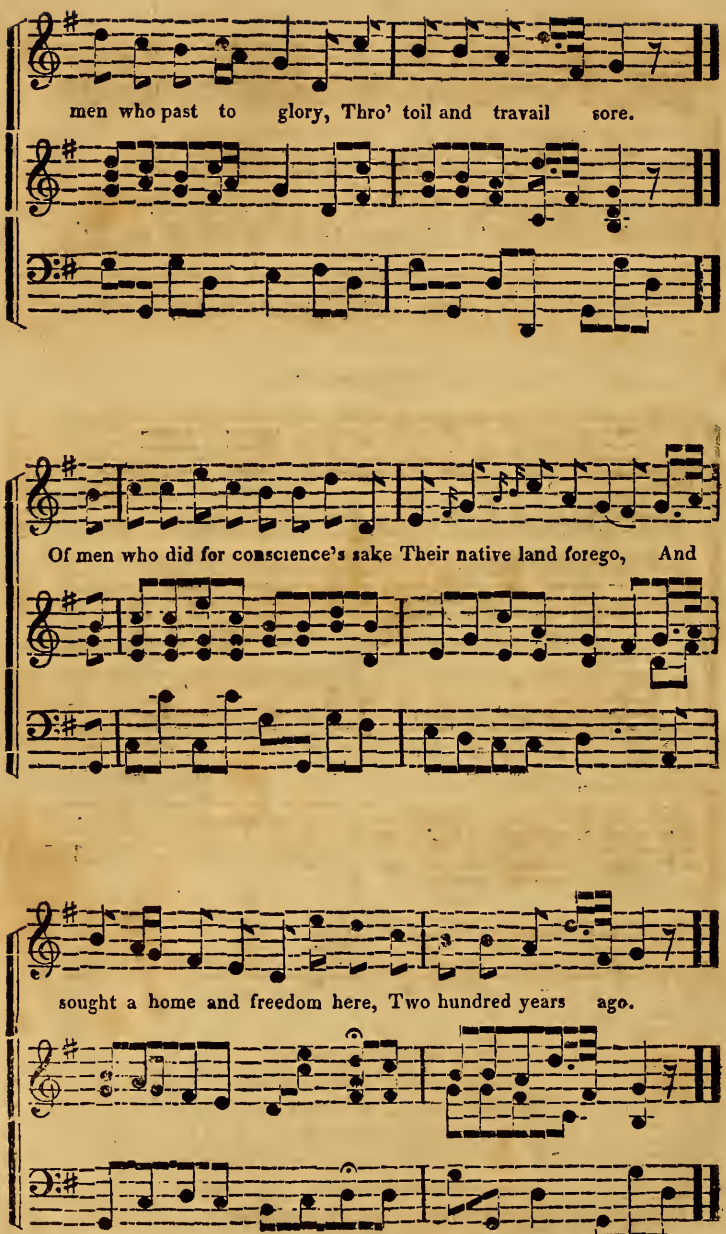
THE PILGRIMS' SONG.

Words by the Rev. JAMES FLINT.

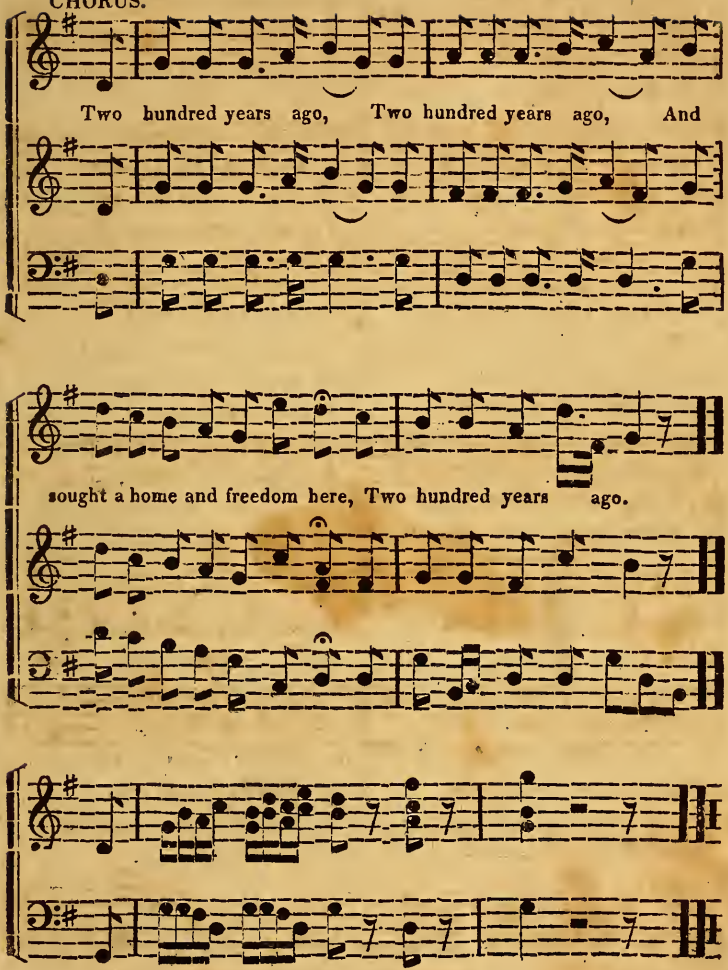
Music composed and sung by ***B. BROWN, Esq.***

At the celebration of the landing of the Forefathers, 1820.




men who past to glory, Thro' toil and travail sore.
Of men who did for conscience's sake Their native land forego, And
sought a home and freedom here, Two hundred years ago.

CHORUS.



O, 'twas no earth-born passion
That bade th' adventurers stray;
The world and all its fashion
With them had passed away.
A voice from heaven made them look
Above the things below,
When here they sought a resting place
Two hundred years ago.

O, dark the scene and dreary,
When here thy sat them down;
Of storms and billows weary,
And chilled with winters frown.
Deep moaned the forests of the wind,
Loud howled the savage foe,
While here there evening prayer arose
Two hundred years ago.

'Twould drown the heart in sorrow
To tell of all their woes;
Nor respite could they borrow,
But from the grave's repose.
Yet nought could daunt the pilgrim band
Or sink their courage low,
Who came to plant the gospel here
Two hundred years ago.

With humble prayer and fasting
In every strait and grief,
They sought the Everlasting,
And found a sure relief.
There cov'nant God o'ershadow'd them,
Their shield from every foe,
And gave them here a dwelling place
Two hundred years ago.

Of fair New-England's glory
They laid the corner stone;
This praise in deathless story
Their grateful sons shall own.
Prophetic they foresaw, in time,
A mighty state should grow
From them, a few faint pilgrims here,
Two hundred years ago.

If greatness be in daring,
Our pilgrim sires were great;
Whose sojourn here unsparing,
Disease and famine wait;
And of their treach'rous foes combined
To lay the strangers low,
While founding here their commonwealth
Two hundred years ago.

Tho' seeming overzealous
In things by us deemed light,
They were but duly jealous
Of power usurping right.
They nobly chose to part with all
Most dear to men below,
To worship here their God in peace
Two hundred years ago.

From seeds they sow'd with weeping
Our richest harvest rise;
We still the fruits are reaping
Of pilgrim enterprize.
Then grateful we to them will pay
The debt of fame we owe,
Who planted here the tree of life
Two hundred years ago.

As comes this period yearly,
Around our cheerful fires,
We'll think and tell how dearly
Our comforts cost our sires.
For them we'll wake the votive song,
And bid the canvas glow,
Whe fixed the home of freedom here
Two hundred years ago.

THE FATHERS OF NEW ENGLAND.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT CAMBRIDGE,

DECEMBER 22, 1844.

By JOHN A. ALBRO,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN CONNECTION WITH
THE SHEPARD SOCIETY.

BOSTON:
CHARLES C. LITTLE AND JAMES BROWN.
MDCCCXLV.

Thurston, Torry, & Company, Printers,
31 *Devonshire Street, Boston.*

Cambridge, December, 1844.

Rev. John A. Albro,

Dear Sir, — Having listened with much pleasure to your Discourse on the 22d instant, and esteeming it an honorable tribute to the memory and character of our Pilgrim Fathers, and believing the dissemination of its principles important, we respectfully request that you will allow it to be published.

Your obedient servants,

Charles C. Little,
Zelotes Hosmer,
Jacob H. Bates,
Charles W. Homer,
William Saunders.
Asa Gray.

Gentlemen,

The Discourse, which you do me the honor to think may be useful to the public, is at your service; and I commit it to the press with the prayer that He who conducted the Pilgrims to these shores, and sustained them in their labors, may make it instrumental in advancing the work which they made so many sacrifices to commence in New England.

Yours, very respectfully,

JOHN A. ALBRO.

Messrs. C. C. Little, Zelotes Hosmer, J. H. Bates, Charles W. Homer, Wm. Saunders, Asa Gray.

DISCOURSE.

PSALM XLIV. 1—3.

WE HAVE HEARD WITH OUR EARS, O GOD, OUR FATHERS HAVE TOLD US, WHAT WORK THOU DIDST IN THEIR DAYS, IN THE TIMES OF OLD. HOW THOU DIDST DRIVE OUT THE HEATHEN WITH THY HAND, AND PLANTEDST THEM; HOW THOU DIDST AFFLICT THE PEOPLE, AND CAST THEM OUT. FOR THEY GOT NOT THE LAND IN POSSESSION BY THEIR OWN SWORD, NEITHER DID THEIR OWN ARM SAVE THEM; BUT THY RIGHT HAND, AND THINE ARM, AND THE LIGHT OF THY COUNTENANCE, BECAUSE THOU HADST A FAVOR UNTO THEM.

Just two hundred and twenty-four years ago this day, a ship's company, consisting of about one hundred persons, landed upon these shores, then inhabited only by wandering savages, and commenced the first permanent, civilized settlement in this part of the world. They were soon followed by other and larger companies of similar character, driven from their native country by the same causes, and having in view the same great object. These colonists, among whom the names of Bradford, Winslow, Brewster, Carver, Winthrop, Endicot, Cotton and Shepard, appear conspicuous, were the political and religious fathers of New England.

It is natural that we, who have entered into their labors, and enjoy the fruits of their toil and self-denial, should wish to know something respecting their character, and to understand the great object

of their sacrifices. Nay, it is the solemn duty of all who call themselves by the name of Puritan, to study the history of their fathers with an enlightened zeal. It has been too much the fashion in New England, to represent the Pilgrims in a contemptible or ridiculous light, and to speak of our institutions, both religious and political, as accidental results of ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism. But this is as ungrateful as it is absurd. We ought to know better; and the time is not far distant when public opinion and feeling will be greatly changed in relation to those men. As new dangers threaten our beloved New England, and principles and practices subversive of our privileges are openly advocated and embraced, we shall instinctively turn to the wisdom of the past, and examine with increasing interest the grounds upon which our liberties and hopes rest; and all sober, intelligent and thoughtful men, whatever may be their religious opinions or ecclesiastical relations, will see in the Pilgrims, not greedy adventurers nor bewildered fanatics, but men chosen of God, and wonderfully fitted both intellectually and morally for the arduous work of laying the foundation of a great, free, and powerful commonwealth, — men who deserve to be held in everlasting remembrance, and honored at each returning anniversary by the praises of a grateful posterity.

It will not be unsuitable or unprofitable for us to dwell for a few moments this morning upon the character, and principles of those from whom we have received this fair inheritance; not merely for the sake of celebrating the praises of men, however good or great, but of commemorating the work which

God wrought in their days, and by their agency, and of awakening our gratitude to Him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift.

Our Pilgrim Fathers were Englishmen, and members, originally, of the church of England. They separated from the church in which they were born and educated, abandoned their pleasant homes, and came to this wilderness, not merely to escape from the oppression to which they were subject on account of non-conformity to the requirements of a religious system which they believed to be inconsistent with the purity, freedom, and simplicity of the Gospel; but to erect the tabernacle of God among the heathen, according to the pattern shown them in the mount; to build around the altar and church of God a religious commonwealth which should be governed, not by the blind and capricious will of man, but by the law of Christ; and to propagate the Gospel among the aborigines of this continent, which had never before been visited by the day-spring from on high. Let them be the expositors of their own principles and designs. "We are thankfully to acknowledge," says Gov. Bradford, "the great work of God in the reformation made in our dear native land; in which the tyranny and power of the pope was cast off, and the purity of doctrine in the chief foundations of religion restored: and though she fell short, in some things, of other reformed churches, especially in government, yet not in the truth and power of godliness, but rather to exceed these in such as the Lord raised up and enlightened among them. But herein was the great defect, that this lordly hierarchy was con-

tinued after the pope was cut off, in the same callings and offices, and ruled (in a manner) by the same laws, and had the same power and jurisdiction over the whole nation, without any distinction; all being compelled, as members of this national church, to submit to the form of worship established, and this government set over them far differing from the liberty of the Gospel and the practice of other reformed churches, who admitted only such into the church, and to partake of the holy things, as manifested repentance, and made public confession of their faith, according to the Scriptures; and had such a ministry set over them as themselves liked and approved of.*

This, not only our fathers, but many in the church, as Ridley, a bishop and a martyr, complained of. And "finding the pious ministers urged with subscription, or silenced, and the people greatly vexed with the commissary courts, apparitors and pursuivants, which they bare sundry years with much patience, till they were led by the continuance and increase of these troubles and other means, to search and see further into these things through the light of God's word; — how that not only the ceremonies were unlawful, but also the lordly and tyrannical power of the prelates, who contrary to the freedom of the Gospel would load the consciences of men, and by their compulsive power make a profane mixture of divine worship; — that their offices, courts and canons, were unlawful, being such as have no warrant in the word of God, but were the same which were used in popery and still retained. Upon which

* Bradford's History of Massachusetts. App. p. 430.

these people shake off this yoke of antichristian bondage, and, as the Lord's free people, join themselves by covenant into a church state, to walk in all his ways, made known, or to be made known to them, according to their best endeavors, whatever it might cost them."*

But their design, as has been said, was not merely to find a spot where they and their posterity might enjoy freedom from what they considered ecclesiastical tyranny; they desired to extend the boundaries of Zion; to make Christ known to the heathen; and to impart to the natives of this country the blessings of a pure Christianity in exchange for the asylum which they sought for themselves. To use their own language, "They hoped the honor of God, of their king and country would be advanced by this settlement without injury to the native inhabitants: they intended to take nothing but what the Indians were willing to dispose of; not to interfere with them except for the maintenance of peace among them, and the propagation of Christianity."

This noble design they attempted to realize by planting CONGREGATIONALISM, which was at once church and state, — a Christian commonwealth, — a church exercising so much temporal power as was necessary to its preservation and perpetuity, — and a state modeled upon the idea, and deriving all its vitality and all its sanctions from the spiritual life of the church. If they erred in thus uniting, or rather identifying the church and state, their descendants and successors have corrected their mistake by separating

* Bradford's History of Massachusetts. App. p. 429.

these two things widely enough. But the church which they here planted, and the political organization which they framed in accordance with their religious ideas, both survive the lapse of time and the changes of the world, and make us acquainted with their view of a free commonwealth, and a truly spiritual church.

Of their political work I do not intend to speak. Respecting the ecclesiastical system which they adopted, a few words will suffice. Congregationalism, — the Congregationalism of our fathers, I mean, — rests professedly, not partly upon the Bible and partly upon the devices of men, like the angel of the apocalypse, who stood with one foot upon the land and the other upon the sea, but directly and solely upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. It recognizes the Redeemer, who gave himself that he might sanctify and cleanse the church by his own blood, and that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, as the only head, and source of all authority. It calls the ministers of Christ brethren, and forbids them in the name of HIM who is the MASTER of us all, to claim any authority or official preëminence over each other. It secures to the churches the right to elect those who are to rule over them in the Lord; to maintain their own discipline and order; and to seek their own edification and religious welfare in the way pointed out by the word of God. It elevates the Bible above the wisdom of man, and makes all the members, from the least to the greatest, amenable to one tribunal, and responsible to one Lawgiver. It aims to give free

scope to individual piety, without encouraging pride of gifts, and calls into exercise the talents of all for the promotion of the common cause. It guarantees the right of private judgment in matters pertaining to the soul's salvation, — encouraging men to think freely, to act conscientiously, to search the Scriptures carefully, — and sets no limit to the development of Christian character. It presents a plain, scriptural Creed, which all who truly believe the Bible, and look to Christ alone for redemption, can assent to, and a form of government and of worship at once simple, conformable to the spirit of the Gospel, and obviously conducive to personal freedom, edification, and spiritual enjoyment,* It exalts the spiritual above the formal, without denying the use of decent forms; inward worship above external rites; obedience to the law of Christ above conformity to man's devices; and God's truth above all the learning and philosophy of the world. It preaches to all men repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as an atoning Saviour, as the great conditions of eternal life ; and when it has secured these, it exhorts its converts to worship and serve God according to the dictates of a conscience purged from dead works, and enlightened by the Holy Ghost. It has ever been a powerful ally of civil freedom, intelligence, general education, and true progress. It has infused something of its free spirit into denominations that reject its doctrines, and condemn its order; and those who would limit its influence are often warmed and animated by its fire. It is the

* See Cambridge Platform, 1648, and Confession of faith, 1680.

nursing queen of missions; and in the name of her divine Lord, calls upon all her children to aid in preaching the Gospel to every creature.

Such, briefly, is the ecclesiastical system which the Pilgrims came to this wilderness to establish. And by the grace of God they accomplished their purpose. The congregational churches, founded by the Fathers, have been the glory of the land, the best expositors of religious rights and duties, and the gate of heaven to innumerable heavy laden sinners. And if the time shall ever come when Congregationalism shall be deprived of its strength, and driven from its place among the institutions of our country, a great light will be extinguished, and even those most hostile to it will have reason to mourn.

What, then, was the moral, and religious character of those who conceived and executed a design so vast and so beneficial? None who read the early history of New England can fail to see that the Pilgrim Fathers were extraordinary men; that, viewed as the founders of a church and state, every thing about them bore the stamp of greatness; that they had an energy, boldness, decision, steadfastness of purpose, and clearness of vision, which place them among the world's greatest men and best benefactors.

But the most prominent and shining characteristic of those men was a deep, pure, and vigorous piety. They were eminently holy men. They walked by faith, and not by sight; and under the severest labor, the most disheartening trials, the most cruel sufferings, endured as seeing him who is invisible. They reposed unwavering confidence in God and in the cause which they had espoused. Amidst all the

hardships to which they were continually exposed, — the terrors of famine, the rigor of a New England winter without comfortable dwellings, the wasting sickness which once threatened the very existence of the infant colony, the unprecedented labors and discouragements which they encountered at every step, — they never desponded, and never murmured. They never expressed regret that they had undertaken to rear the tabernacle of God among the savages of the wilderness, nor breathed a wish, like the Israelites of old, to go back to the country from whence they came out. "We are well weaned," said they, "from the delicate milk of our mother country, and inured to the difficulties of a strange land. We are knit together in a strict sacred bond, to take care of the good of each other and of the whole. It is not with us as with other men, whom small things can discourage, or small discontents cause to wish themselves at home again." They never doubted that the cause they had undertaken, would prosper in the end, or that God would glorify himself by the permanent establishment of Christianity in this new world. When they were brought apparently to the brink of destruction, and nothing appeared to the eye of sense but a speedy annihilation of all their hopes; when He in whom they had trusted, and for whose glory they had made these immense sacrifices, seemed to frown upon their enterprise, and to disown both them and their work; they never rebelled against his providence, nor questioned his love. Oppressed, afflicted, cast out from the world's favor and protection, forsaken of man, and apparently of God also for a season, shut in by the merciless sea, and the savage

wilderness, they prayed and sang as aforetime; and in their deepest distress exclaimed with the clear vision and earnest faith of the Prophet, "Although the figtree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet we will rejoice in the Lord, we will joy in the God of our salvation." Truly we may say of them as the apostle speaks of the elders and persecuted saints of old, of whom the world was not worthy, that theirs was a faith which subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire.

The great end of all their labor and sacrifices, was not, as we have seen, personal aggrandisement, but the glory of God. The settlement of New England was designed to secure a place where they and their children might live according to the divine commandments, and where they might be instrumental in extending the knowlege of salvation. This is evident from all that they did. Their government, laws, literary institutions, even the soil from which they gained their daily bread, were consecrated to Christ and the Church. Pure and undefiled religion was all in all with them. For this they went out, like Abraham, from their father's house, not knowing whither they went; for this they cheerfully endured all the privations and hardships of the wilderness; for this they sacrificed every thing dear to them in this life; for this they labored, and were at any moment ready to die.

They reverenced the Bible. Probably there never

was a community of professing Christians who bowed with such profound, cheerful, and enlightened submission to the revealed will of God. Their faith in its doctrines was mingled with no doubt or misgiving. Their obedience to its requirements was checked by no fear of consequences. They loved to meditate upon its doctrines and promises. It was infinitely more dear to them than any earthly good. In their wanderings it was their cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. In their afflictions it was their comforter. Its light shone like the shekinah in their temples. Their laws were framed upon its legislation. Its spirit hallowed their affections and their motives. Its wisdom prompted and sanctioned all their works. They left it as the most precious legacy to their children. And to their constant, prayerful, and systematic study of the divine oracles we must ascribe that clear sightedness, that profound wisdom, that lofty patriotism, and that perseverance in well doing, which so preëminently distinguished them.

They regarded the Sabbath as a divine Institution. One reason assigned by the Plymouth colony for their leaving Holland, where they had been kindly received, and where they might have remained, was, we are told, that their children might not be led to adopt the lax notions which prevailed there, even among Christians, in regard to the keeping of the Sabbath. They commenced their great work in this country with the deep conviction that the religion, the morals, and the temporal prosperity of the commonwealth were intimately connected with the right observance of this day. They declared in their laws that the violation of the fourth commandment by a community tends to

the dishonor of God, and to the reproach of religion, renders divine ordinances unprofitable, destroys the power of godliness, is the source of all profaneness and irreligion, and brings down the judgments of God upon the land. And their practice was consistent with their principles. They remembered the Sabbath day to keep it holy. They did every thing in their power to secure a strict observance of it by their children and the population in general. They required by law that the Sabbath should be kept, outwardly at least, by abstinence from all servile labor, unnecessary travelling, and vain recreation; and that all persons should attend public worship on the Lord's day, unless prevented by some reasonable cause. *

For this they have been blamed by some in modern times. A generation has come upon the stage who are disposed to undo all that the Fathers did upon this subject. For many years there has been a growing disregard of the Sabbath. Business and pleasure are allowed to disturb its quiet, to the scandal of religion, and the grief of all Christians. And to fill up the measure of our folly, conventions are held, and newspapers established, and lecturers employed to convince the community that the fourth commandment was never binding upon us, and that to follow the example of the Pilgrims is absurd and oppressive. I wonder what they would have thought of such a meeting as was held not a great while ago in the city of Boston, with reference to the claims of this sacred day. In their gloomiest moments, I am sure, they never dreamed that men claiming this as their native

* General Laws, pp. 132, 133.

land, and calling themselves Christian reformers, would endeavor to destroy an institution which they deemed so essential to our temporal as well as spiritual prosperity. What say you, my hearers, were the Fathers right or wrong upon this subject? Shall we follow their example, or join with those who would blot out the Sabbath, and destroy all the privileges and blessings connected with it.

They highly valued the ordinances of the gospel. They landed upon these shores as a church of Christ; and their main object was to enjoy without molestation the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments, according to their understanding of the Divine will. And as they prosecuted their design of founding here a religious commonwealth, they adopted it as a principle, never to commence a settlement without a pastor to preach the Gospel, and to break unto them the bread of life. One of their first works, after fixing upon the site of a town, was to build a house for the worship of God. Poor and feeble as they were, they seem never to have been too poor or too feeble to find out a place for the Lord,—a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. The towns in New England, generally, for more than a hundred years after the landing of the Pilgrims, did not average over forty families when they built their first house of worship, and began to enjoy the stated ministrations of the Gospel: and there are accounts of "raisings," as they are termed, where all the inhabitants of the town could sit together upon the sills of the house. How deeply must they have loved the sanctuary to be inclined to make such efforts and sac-

rifices, as in their weakness and poverty they must have done, in order to enjoy its privileges.

They were men of much prayer, and communion with God. The greatness of their work and of their trials taught them the value of a throne of grace; and they gathered about it, not to perform a ceremony, or to fulfil a duty, but to ask for the strength they needed in their perils and their sufferings. Perhaps there never was a people who sought so constantly, so fervently, so perseveringly, the Divine blessing upon their work. They undertook nothing either of a public or private nature without solemn prayer. They baptized their whole life with the spirit of supplication. It was this that imparted fortitude and courage to their hearts. It was this that bore them triumphantly through their hardships. It was this that gave to their religious character that firmness and transparency which rendered it so remarkable. It was this that crowned their work with success. We may safely say that no company of prayerless men, ever exhibited the character, or performed the works, or enjoyed the Divine peace, that distinguished our Fathers.

They were men of profound wisdom, prudence, and foresight. Many are accustomed to speak of the Pilgrims as people, whose views were bounded by a thorny and unintelligible creed, and whose affections were confined within the limits of a small and peculiar sect. Piety was, doubtless, their most prominent and beautiful characteristic; and they labored with singular devotion for the prosperity of the church, and the diffusion of their religious views. But they were not merely pious and narrow-minded theologians.

Many of them were great men, even in the sense in which that phrase is used by the world. They possessed all the elements of a sublime and illustrious character. They were men of highly cultivated minds. They had much knowledge of the world. Their plans were conceived and executed with great wisdom and prudence. They were far in advance of their age in sound political knowledge. They were public spirited men; who lived not to themselves, but for a remote posterity. England at that time had not many better men, and it would be a grievous wrong to their memory to compare them with the founders of Greece or Rome. That we do not estimate their intellectual character extravagantly, is evident from their works, — from what they accomplished. They have left their image and superscription upon all that we see around us. Here is a desert turned into a fruitful field. Here are institutions, religious, political, and literary, which are adapted to secure and perpetuate the most precious rights of man; — institutions, which, with the light and experience of two centuries we have not changed materially, except for the worse. When did feeble and narrow-minded men ever conceive and execute a work like this? "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Wherefore by their fruits we may know them."

That the Pilgrim Fathers understood the importance of general education in relation to the virtue, freedom, and happiness of society, is evident from their early and unwearied efforts to diffuse among the people a sound and healthful literature. The schoolmaster held, in their estimation, a place next the gospel minister; and the school-house, in their settlements, rose

fast by the house of God. To them we owe that system of common school education which extends the benefits of knowledge to all classes, and to every man's door. And as soon as they had provided themselves with dwellings for their families, and erected convenient places for God's worship, while yet poor, and suffering the want of even the common necessaries of life, they founded a High School, which soon became a flourishing College, for the advancement of learning, and the thorough education of their posterity; believing that it greatly concerned the welfare of the country that its youth should be acquainted with good literature, and dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when their first pastors were in the dust.*

There was one element in the educational system of the Puritans which distinguished it, and which we must not pass over without remark, and that was religion. Believing that it is "one chief object of Satan to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures," and that it was necessary to the safety of the people that youth should be educated in sound doctrine, as well as in good learning, they took care that all the children of the commonwealth should be taught to read and understand the Bible. They had but little confidence in knowledge without piety; and they sought to perpetuate the privileges and blessings they had suffered so much to secure, by imbuing the minds of their children with the doctrines of the Gospel.

It was with these views and feelings that they caused the Bible and the Catechism to be taught diligently in the college; and required that all instructors of youth

* New England's First Fruits, 1643.

should be sound in the faith, as well as unexceptionable in their morals.* Their deep interest and confidence in catechetical instruction was remarkable, even in an age when that mode of communicating religious truth was far more common than it is now. Every minister was expected to catechize all the children in his congregation frequently, and all parents were required to see that their children were prepared for that exercise. The selectmen of the several towns, also, were required to see that all heads of families catechized their children and domestics in the grounds and principles of religion at least once a week; and if any were unable to do this, they were to cause such children and domestics to learn some short orthodox catechism by heart, that they might be prepared to answer the questions that should be put to them out of the book by their parents, or by the selectmen themselves.†

It is to be greatly lamented that catechetical instruction, which our Fathers felt to be so important in the religious education of the youth of New England, should be so generally laid aside as it is at the present day. To this is unquestionably to be attributed much of the the ignorance, error, and instability which has for a long season been so deplorably manifest among us. Nor will these evils be removed or diminished until this practice is revived, and attended to with as much faithfulness, diligence, and prayer, both in families and in the church, as in the days of the Puritans. It may be replied that we have the Sabbath school, which our Fathers had not. But Sabbath schools, beneficial as they are, should never be permitted to interfere with

* General Laws, p. 136. † Ibid. p. 26.

parental or ministerial responsibility to the young; nor be regarded as a substitute for thorough doctrinal and catechetical instruction at home. There is need of both, and they should go hand in hand in the great work of training up the rising generation in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Such was the character of those men who turned the wastes of New England into fruitful fields, and made the wilderness to blossom as the rose.

But it is said they had their errors. It is even so. To err is human. No one will maintain that they never believed anything that was not true, nor did anything that had better not have been done. But in what period of the world, in what nation, shall we find a company of men to whom was committed so great a work, or who have executed the task assigned them, whatever it was, so nobly and so successfully? What were their errors? They were intolerant bigots, says one. They were bloody persecutors, says another.

The charge of bigotry is often brought against the Fathers of New England, by those, who of all men have the least right to say anything upon that subject. The words of the Saviour to those who clamored for judgment upon the woman taken in adultery, "Let him that is without this sin among you cast the first stone at her," contain an admonition which these swift witnesses against the Puritans would do well to lay to heart. Moreover we may insist upon the evidence that the Fathers of New England were bigoted at all. What is bigotry? Bigotry has been defined to be a blind partiality for a particular sect, combined with hatred of all who differ from us. If this

definition be correct, the Pilgrims were no bigots. They were Calvinists indeed; and that they loved their own church with an affection stronger than death, is evident from the hardships they endured, and the personal sacrifices they made to plant it, and to sustain it in this country. But their attachment was not blind or foolish. They knew by experience the value of what they loved, and felt that the most intense affection is cold in comparison with that love wherewith they were loved by Him who died for them.

Nor did they hate any man or sect for differing from them in opinion or practice. When the Massachusetts company were about to sail from Yarmouth, they addressed a letter to the Christians of England which exhibits a most kind, liberal, benevolent, and Christian spirit. "We esteem it an honor," said they, "to call the Church of England, from whence we rise, our dear Mother; and cannot part from our native country, where she specially resideth, without much sadness of heart, and many tears. You are not ignorant that the Spirit of God stirred up the heart of the apostle Paul to make continual mention of Philippi, which was a colony of Rome. Let the same Spirit, we beseech you, put you in mind to pray for us without ceasing, who are weak colony from yourselves, making request for us to God in your prayers. And so far as God shall enable us, we will give Him no rest on your behalf, wishing our heads and hearts may be as fountains of tears for your everlasting welfare, when we shall be in our poor cottages in the wilderness, overshadowed with the spirit of supplication, through the manifold necessities and tribulations which may not altogether unexpectedly, nor, we hope, unprofitably befal

us." What language to use towards a church from which they had received such hard measure! If they could have hated any denomination of Christians, it would have been the Church of England. But fleeing as they were from fines and imprisonment to a waste howling wilderness, they pour out their prayers and tears for that Mother, who seemed to have closed her heart against some of the worthiest of her children, and made their lives bitter with hard bondage. Even Cotton Mather, who has been thought the straitest and most exclusive of his sect, says that the New England churches, though they were "shy of using any thing in the worship of God, for which they could not see a warrant in the Bible, yet swallowed up the names of Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Anti-pædo Baptist, in that of Christian; persons of all those persuasions being taken into fellowship, when visible godliness recommended them." * When did bigotry ever use language like this? What denomination of Christians will now reciprocate this charitable judgment which went forth from the heart of Congregationalism, and which every true son of the Pilgrims is now ready to subscribe with his own hand?

The other charge referred to is more serious. They fled from persecution, it is said, and as soon as they obtained power, they became the merciless persecutors of all who could not agree with them in opinion and practice.

This has been repeated so often, so confidently, and with such a plausible reference to time, place, and

* Enchantments Encountered, p. 10.

persons, that to many it seems like an incontrovertible fact; and any attempt to vindicate those much injured men, may be regarded as indicating great ignorance of their characters, or disregard of historical truth. To us, however, this is not clear. After a somewhat careful examination of the history of those troublous times which tried the faith, and patience, and principles of our Fathers, we are unable to find satisfactory evidence that they were ever guilty of persecuting any man, or body of men, on account of their religious opinions. That it was their first great object to establish a church and commonwealth upon principles, which were regarded by many as exclusive; that they adopted a discipline which was felt by dissenters from their doctrines to be severe; that they guarded the infant church, which was of all things in this world dearest to their hearts, and which they perilled all their hopes on earth to plant firmly upon this soil, with a jealousy very inconvenient to those who hated it; and that they were at times severe in the punishment of those who intentionally violated the religious or civil order of the country, no one will deny. But that they were persecutors of good men, in the proper sense of that word, cannot be shown from the undisputed record of their public acts; and even the jealousy of dissent, and severity of discipline which are complained of, find an ample apology in the circumstances under which they were obliged to act.

What is persecution? There is much vagueness and confusion of thought in the public mind in relation to this question; and every man who suffers in mind, body, or estate, from the doings of church or

commonwealth, is called a martyr by the multitude, who do not discriminate between the sentence of a wise and necessary law, and an act of wanton cruelty. We may learn what persecution is from the consolation which the Saviour administers to those who are objects of it. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for *my sake*." This passage requires us, in all cases, to examine the character and acts of those who suffer, as well as of those against whom the charge of persecution is brought.

The persecutor is a man who hates truth, and good men; who uses his power to harass and distress those who seek only to enjoy inalienable rights, and to do the work which God has assigned them; who endeavors by fines, imprisonment, and death, to suppress the doctrines of the Gospel, and to destroy the liberty with which Christ has made men free. Every act of undue severity, or even injustice, is not persecution. To imprison or hang a man for violating the laws of the state; to excommunicate a heretic from the church; to expel a disturber of the peace from the society which he would subvert, — is not to persecute him. It is an old and sound remark, that it is not the kind or degree of suffering which a man may endure, but the cause which makes a martyr. Men complain that they are objects of relentless persecution, because they are not permitted to promulgate by the tongue and pen any doctrines which they have adopted, or are involved in difficulties

by the violation of the fundamental principles of the government under which they live: as if every opinion of theirs is an eternal truth which all men are bound to reverence, and every action the result of a pure conscience, which it would be a sin against God and humanity to discountenance. But the Saviour promises a blessing only upon those who suffer for *righteousness'* sake. It is not a man's own opinion, but Christ's truth, that is the proper object of persecution. Men cannot be martyrs, except as witnesses for God and his cause.

They must also be good men. "Blessed are ye," says the Saviour, "when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you *falsely*." A man must not give occasion for any one to speak evil of him. "If a man suffer as a Christian," says the apostle, "let him not be ashamed. But let none of you suffer as a *murderer*, or as a *thief*, or as a *busy-body* in *other men's matters:* for what glory is it, if when ye be buffetted for your *faults*, ye shall take it patiently?"* "Having your conversation *honest* among the Gentiles, and having a *good conscience*, that whereas they speak evil of you, as evil doers, they may be ashamed that *falsely* accuse your good conversation in Christ."† If, then, a man professing to be a Christian, acts inconsistently with his profession; if he does not submit to the law of Christ; if he exhibits the spirit of Cain or of Korah, and receives a just recompense for the wrong that he has done, we are not to consider him a martyr, nor feel much compassion

* 1 Peter, iv. 15, 16. † 1 Peter, ii. 12.

for his sufferings. The act by which he suffers is not persecution, but punishment. It falls not upon righteousness and truth, but upon crime, which the law ought to punish wherever it appears. We should not regard the clamor of such sufferers. Shall men of perverse minds be permitted to plead their religion as an excuse for their evil deeds, and when they suffer as wrong-doers, to complain that they are persecuted? Shall the wolf in sheep's clothing be looked upon as a martyr, because he is driven by force from the fold, or has an iron collar placed about his neck?

It is well also to examine the temper manifested by those who complain that they are persecuted. Our Saviour points out the graces by which his martyrs are adorned; a heavenly wisdom which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; a divine patience that complains to none but God; a holy courage that fears nothing but sin; a pure zeal that burns like the fire kindled from heaven upon the altar of sacrifice; above all, a charity that thinketh no evil, that rejoiceth not in iniquity but in the truth, that will pity, and forgive, and bless, and pray for the guilty persecutor, and will not fail even at the stake or upon the cross. With such a temper the blood of the martyr becomes the seed of the church.

Now let us judge our Fathers and their acts of alleged persecution, by these plain Gospel principles. When it is said that they fled from persecution, and as soon as they obtained power, began to persecute all who differed from them in opinion, we should ask

ourselves again, who our Fathers were, — what was their position, — what were the circumstances in which they were called to act, — and who were the objects of their severity.

The Pilgrim Fathers were not, as we have seen, or may easily learn, haters of truth, or of good men. They were not revilers of those who endeavored to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. They were not enemies of that kingdom of righteousness and peace which Christ came to establish in this world. On the contrary, they were men who feared God, — who submitted with child-like docility to the Law of Christ, — who loved the cause of religion more than father, or mother, or country, — who rejoiced in all the successes of the church, — who blessed God for the partial reformation of the body from which they were at last compelled to separate, — who longed and prayed for the coming of Christ's kingdom in power, — and who could say respecting Zion and her sons, as David said of Jerusalem, "If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." How could such men harbor the spirit of persecution, or use their power to crush and destroy any faithful servant of Jesus Christ?

They came to this country, as I have said, in order to organize a religious community, according to what they believed the Law of Christ sanctioned and required; to worship God in the forms which they judged most conducive to religious enjoyment and spiritual edification; to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and to spread

a pure gospel among the benighted tribes that roamed through these forests. In order to realize their object, they abandoned the soil which gave them birth. They left Christendom to build the church of God in its own way. They chose a spot for their purpose, far from the civilized world, — a spot to which no nation could lay a higher claim than their own, founded as it was upon prior occupancy, and actual purchase of the wild tribes that sometimes used it for hunting. They invaded nobody's rights; "they got not the land in possession by their sword," but in a manner that all the world must pronounce just. And they asked of their fellow-men nothing but to be allowed the privilege of carrying out their own principles upon their own soil, and of regulating the affairs of their church and state, according to their views of truth and duty.

And with what spirit and temper did they proceed to execute their great design? First of all, their charter declared expressly, that there should always be liberty of conscience in matters of religion. Then they declared that all the people of God who were orthodox in judgment, and not scandalous in life, should have full liberty to gather themselves into a church estate, provided they did it in a Christian way, observing the rules of Christ revealed in his word, and with the approbation of the magistrates, and of the elders of the neighboring churches; and that every church should freely enjoy all the ordinances of God, according to the rules of the Gospel. And, finally, they announced to the world, that all strangers professing the Christian religion, who should flee to this colony from the tyranny of their oppressors, should be succored accord-

ing to their utmost ability.* These provisions, all must allow, were as liberal as the condition and objects of the colony could possibly permit.

It is true that while they professed to maintain the inviolability of conscience in matters of religion, they regarded those who obstinately promulgated doctrines subversive of the Christian faith, destructive to the souls of men, and dangerous to society, as enemies of the commonwealth; and therefore they passed laws designed to restrain or punish such persons.† They were willing that all persons within their jurisdiction, whether inhabitants or strangers, should enjoy the same law and justice that was general for their colony, in all cases proper to their cognizance, without partiality or delay; ‡ but at the same time they ordered that all who endeavored to destroy or disturb the peace of the churches here established, by openly renouncing or reviling their church estate, or their ministry, or any ordinance dispensed in them, should be punished with fine, imprisonment, or banishment, according to the exigences of the case.||

Under such laws, which they not only had a perfect right to enact, but which were obviously required by the condition of the colony, a few persons who came into the country with no respect for the government, or good-will toward the churches, might have suffered some inconvenience. When they felt themselves bound to oppose publicly the religious order here established, and to disobey the laws of the state, they were compelled to endure the privation of accustomed privileges, or to withdraw from

* General Laws, p. 143. † Ib. p. 39. ‡ Ib. p. 143. || Ib. p. 45.

the jurisdiction; which they always had perfect liberty to do. Those members of the church of England who had found their way to the colony, were not allowed to observe publicly the forms of that church; and Thomas Lechford, who thanked God that he "understood by experience, that there is no such government for Englishmen, or any nation, as a monarchy; nor for Christians, as by a lawful ministry under godly diocesan bishops, deducing their station and calling from Christ and his apostles, in descent or succession," complained that he suffered much by reason of not being able to agree to the discipline here established; being "kept from the sacrament, and all place of preferment in the commonwealth, and forced to get a living by writing petty things, which scarce found him bread."*

The Baptists, also, were doubtless subject to inconveniences which must have been somewhat galling. When a Baptist church was gathered in opposition to a law of the colony above referred to, the members were summoned before the magistrates, and forbidden to proceed; but refusing to obey the law, and persevering in their purpose to organize themselves into a church, some of them were imprisoned for contempt, and some were ordered to depart from the colony.† But this act, it will be observed, however harsh it may seem, had no relation to their opinions upon the subject of baptism, but to their actual violation of the laws. The condition of Baptists, as well as of Episcopalians, was, no doubt, unpleasant, under a government so thoroughly

* Plain Dealing, p. 68, 69. † Bradford's Hist. Mass. p. 68.

congregational; but we hear of nothing like the persecution of them merely on account of their religious opinions. That the government had a legal right by their charter to establish a church polity which they deemed conformable to the word of God; to forbid forms of worship which they judged to be unscriptural; and to insist that if churches were gathered here, they should be organized in accordance with the ecclesiastical system which they had adopted amidst so many trials and hardships, no one can doubt. It might have been injudicious; it might have been contrary to sound policy; but it was not persecution. The error of our Fathers, if they were in error upon this point, consisted, says Bradford, in assuming that they had at last discovered the true meaning of revelation, and that it was their duty to allow no deviations from it.* But the historian himself, while he condemns their strict discipline and government in some cases, and their severity towards those who would not conform to their usages, admits that the toleration pleaded for would have been fatal to the design which they had in view. They came to America, he says, under great privations, after long persecutions, to enjoy their own forms of worship, which they believed to be in accordance with the word of God. And had they not been select in receiving new comers, and in rejecting the turbulent and schismatic, their object would have been entirely defeated, and the colony probably broken up.† So that the great question is, whether the end they had in view in coming to this country, was of importance enough to the church and to the world,

* Bradford's History of Massachusetts. p. 50. † Ibid. p. 33.

to be secured by laws which subjected a few dissenters to such privations as have been complained of. Who will say that the unlimited toleration demanded, subversive as it must have been of the great object of our Fathers, would have been better than the New England which they left us as an inheritance?

But there are cases of greater alleged oppression and persecution, which are often referred to as evidence that the Puritans cherished a bitter and relentless hostility against all who differed from them in opinion. I allude to the banishment of Roger Williams; the imprisonment, banishment, and capital punishment of the Quakers; the dispersion of the company at Mount Wollaston; and the punishment of some others, respecting which I wish to say a few words. I do not refer to the "trial of the witches," because that melancholy excitement does not properly belong to this place.

Of Roger Williams I desire to speak with all suitable respect. He came to Massachusetts a congregational minister of no mean standing, and by his talents and learning soon acquired considerable influence among the people. That he was a lover of freedom, and capable of great usefulness in church and state, will not be denied. It was doubtless very grievous to him that he was obliged to leave the colony at all, especially in the dead of winter, though he was furnished with money, it is said, from Governor Winthrop's purse to defray the expenses of his journey. But it is proper to remark that he was regarded, even by his best friends, as "an eccentric man," greatly "wanting in prudence and stability of character," "very precipitate and passionate," and easily carried

away by "extravagant theories." He professed, in later life, to be a Baptist; but he was not banished for being a Baptist. His opinions in relation to the mode or subjects of baptism, had no influence whatever in drawing down upon him the indignation of the government. He was required to leave the colony because he was a disturber of the public peace, and dangerous to the well-being of the church.

In what way he became obnoxious to the charge of being an enemy of the commonwealth, whom it was necessary to get rid of, will appear by a brief reference to some of the dangerous doctrines which he promulgated in spite of all the kind and friendly efforts which were made to persuade him to desist. He violently opposed the whole civil and ecclesiastical order which he found established here. He denied the validity of the government's title to the soil founded on the royal charter; and, although every foot of land, occupied by the people, had been actually purchased and paid for, maintained that the Indians were the only true proprietors of the country. He denied the right of the civil authority to make laws for the punishment of any breach of the fourth commandment which did not disturb the public peace. He maintained that it was unlawful to administer an oath to an unregenerate man; and that it was wrong even to pray with unconverted people, though they were wife and children. He wrote letters to the churches complaining bitterly of the injustice and oppression of the magistrates, the direct tendency of which was to excite disaffection among the people against the government. He advised his own church at Salem to renounce communion with all the church-

es in the colony, as full of antichrist and corruption. He condemned all who would not join with him in anathematizing the church of England. And in the expression and maintenance of his opinions, he was violent, denunciatory, and abusive. With all his good qualities, he was, by his position, learning, and talents, a dangerous subject of the new government, and a destroyer of the peace of the infant churches: and as it was impossible to convince, satisfy, or reclaim him, he was required to depart out of the jurisdiction as the only means of restoring quiet; a sentence, which, considering the provocation he gave, was remarkably lenient and mild.*

The treatment of the Quakers has often been represented as unreasonable, and unmercifully severe. But who were the Quakers, that their sufferings should awaken a sympathy which cannot be aroused by the afflictions of the Puritans? It cannot be pretended that they suffered for righteousness' sake; for no one who reads their history can discover any religion at all either in their creed or their temper. Unlike the Friends of the present day, they were fanatics of the wildest and most dangerous character, who came to this country for the express purpose of overthrowing, if possible, the existing government. They outrageously reviled both ministers and magistrates; and denounced the judgments of God upon the people if they did not oppose and resist their rulers. They grossly violated the laws of decency and decorum as well as of the state, sometimes rushing into churches on the Sabbath, in a state of

* See Winthrop's Journal, pp. 84, 88.

shameful nudity, and making outcries which were as blasphemous as they were exciting.

Knowing the mischief they had done in England, the Court passed a law that no Quaker should be landed from any ship, or harbored by any person in the colony. But this not being sufficient to prevent them from swarming like "rogues and vagabonds," into the country, other laws were enacted subjecting them to whipping, branding, imprisonment, and banishment. Even these severe modes of punishment were found insufficient to abate the nuisance ; and at length a law was made, subjecting any Quaker, who should return to the colony after having been four times convicted and sent away, to the punishment of death.* Under this law, four, I believe, were sentenced to be hung. One was reprieved upon condition of departing out of the colony. Another refused to save his life in this way, though earnestly exhorted to do so, choosing rather to die, than to submit to the authority of the government, which he had done so much to disturb. Several others were punished less severely; but all who are now held up as martyrs, suffered as evil doers of the most incorrigible character, whom it would have been madness to permit to go at large among the people. If we should think their punishment too severe, we cannot call it persecution without an unpardonable abuse of language.

Indeed, when we consider the ungovernable malignity, the blasphemous doctrines, and the rebellious conduct of those fanatics, in connexion with the weakness of the colony at that early period, we can hardly say that their punishment was too severe. The Government

* General Laws, p, 60, 71, 62, 63.

was evidently disposed, as they themselves declare, to use as much lenity as was consistent with their safety; and resorted to extreme measures only when they found that mild ones were unavailing.* Even now, when we boast that every man is free to utter any opinions he pleases, there is a limit to the development of fanatacism and infidelity. Blasphemy is punished by our own courts with imprisonment; and all opinions, and practices which violate the peace of society, and become dangerous to the public morals, are suppressed by the strong arm of the law, without subjecting our government to the charge of persecution, except among rogues and vagabonds.

In regard to Gorton, and the "nest of revellers" at Mount Wollaston, as Mr. Adams calls them, a word must suffice. They were the declared enemies of the colony. They had neither religion nor honesty. They neither feared God, nor regarded man. Their conduct was lawless, desperate, and utterly inconsistwith the public safety. They furnished the savages with weapons and "strong water," and endeavored to involve them in war with the whites. "Toleration in those cases, would have been self-murder." In the case of these men, and of many others who suffered under the government of the early Puritans, there was neither persecution, cruelty, nor injustice. They were not, like our Fathers, harassed for *not doing* what the state, according to the Law of Christ, had no right to require, but properly punished for *doing* what both law and gospel alike forbade. They suffered, not for their religious opinions, nor for their

* General Laws, p. 62.

obedience to Christ, but for wilful resistance to a government founded upon the Bible; not for religion, but for rebellion; not for truth, but for treason. They resisted the ordinance of God, and received to themselves the damnation which they obstinately incurred.*

But I will vindicate the Puritans no farther. They had their faults, you say. Be it so. The sun has its spots, but nevertheless it fills the world with light. Our Fathers were men; but what men! In what country or age of the world can you find their superiors? In the language of an old writer, "God sifted three kingdoms to obtain wheat for the planting of New England." A divine blessing rested upon their habitations. They finished the work that was given them to do: and we may say with Nicodemus, that none could have done the things which they did, except God were with them. "May the Lord our God be with us, as he was with our Fathers." And that He may not leave us nor forsake us, let us cultivate the ardent and humble piety which characterized the Puritans. Let us enthrone the word of God in our hearts. Let us maintain the ordinances of the Gospel in their purity and simplicity. Let us cherish a spirit of prayer. Let us attend to the thorough religious education of our children. Let us remember that the work of preserving, if not as difficult, is as necessary as that of building up. Let us not forget that we are to transmit this inheritance to our posterity. Our Fathers, through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises. Soon we shall join the congregation of the

* Rom. xiii. 2.

dead, leaving to our children a land consecrated to Christ and the church. May we leave it with the assurance, that it has not been diminished in value in our hands. And may we rise at the last day with our Fathers, whose memory we honor, and whose faith we follow, to join with them, and with all who have come out of great tribulation, in ascribing blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto Him who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever.

THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PILGRIMS.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

CHURCH OF THE PILGRIMS,

IN LOWELL, MASS., JULY 12th, 1846.

BY M. A. H. NILES, PASTOR.

LOWELL:
PUBLISHED BY N. L. DAYTON.
1846.

PENHALLOW & HART, PRINTERS,
16 Merrimack Street, Lowell.

SERMON.

AND CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH.—*Heb. xi.* 13.

I HAVE not unfrequently met the question,—'Why does your church call itself by the name of the CHURCH OF THE PILGRIMS?'—and the tone in which this question is proposed, betrays the impression, that the selection of this distinctive name is not in good taste, because of the inappropriateness of such a title to a Unitarian Church. Such an impression, I think, is general, not only on the part of 'Orthodox' Christians, but on the part also of those of our own persuasion. On the one hand, it is thought that we have no right to claim a spiritual kindred with our Pilgrim Fathers; and on the other, the desire to claim such kindred is regarded as a very questionable emulation. While the feelings of one party fall but little short of an idolatrous veneration, mingled with no equivocal indications of the complacent belief, that they are the sole heirs of all the virtues of our Puritan ancestry; there is, in the minds of not a few of the other party, the feeling that there was very little in the character of that ancestry which was worthy of imitation or of respect. And those whose religious faith confessedly differs from the faith of the Pilgrims, as well as those who inherit that faith, doubt the suitableness of the name of our Church.

In a successful vindication of the fitness of this name, the unsoundness of each of the conflicting views here

noticed, must, of necessity, be exhibited. While the Unitarian christian will find much in the character of the Pilgrims of which he may properly be emulous, and much with which his own religious position has very close affinities, the claim set up by our 'Orthodox' brethren, to be regarded as exclusively their spiritual descendants, will be found to be utterly groundless. And, without descending to meet captious accusings and unchristian denunciation,* we may yet, with the clearest propriety, show to the world, that it is not without good reason that we adopt the name of the 'CHURCH OF THE PILGRIMS.' To the question,—'Why do you select such a name?' we may return a manly and a satisfactory reply.

To meet this question fairly and intelligently, it is first of all necessary to form just and clear views of what the peculiar and distinctive characteristics of our Pilgrim Fathers were. In claiming to be the sole spiritual heirs of the Pilgrims, our 'Orthodox' brethren assume, that their distinctive characteristics were, an attachment to Congregational forms of worship, and, most of all, their Trinitarian and Calvinistic faith. They seem to take it for granted, that the leading and distinctive feature in the character of the Pilgrims was their, so called 'Orthodoxy.' And the ground, on which the claim of Unitarians, to be regarded as the descendants of the Pilgrims, is disputed, is, that they reject this Orthodoxy: for the Unitarian unites with his Orthodox brother in the advocacy and maintenance of Congregational forms of worship. Is it so, then, that the Unitarian has no true affinities with the Pilgrims, because he rejects a Trinitarian and Calvinistic faith?

* In a recent number of the 'Congregational Journal,' an 'Orthodox,' and a professedly Christian journal, the following paragraph appeared, with the sanction, if not from the pen, of the Editor.

'LUCUS A NON LUCENDO.—A Unitarian Church has been recently gathered in Lowell, which has assumed the name of the 'Church of the Pilgrims.' A minister has been selected by the name of Niles, formerly of Marblehead, who has just abjured the faith of the Pilgrims, and pledged himself to destroy what they built up. One of the Church says, —'Our motto is, *Nil desperandum Christo duce.*' Truly this is an age of travesty.'

That the religious faith of the exiles of the 'Mayflower' was Trinitarian and Calvinistic, it were, of course, most preposterous to call into dispute. But the great question is,—Was this the leading and distinctive feature of their religious character? Was the defence and protection of this faith the principal motive in the heroic purpose,—did it operate at all in this purpose,—to leave the firesides of their native land, and to found a new church on the unfriendly coasts of New England?

To give this question a fair and just decision, it must be borne carefully in mind, that, in order to determine what are the distinctive characteristics of any man, or of any body of men, we must fix our eye exclusively upon those peculiarities which distinguish them from other men, or from other bodies of men. These characteristics will not be points of character or of faith, which they hold in common with all, or with any other men. They must be points in which they differ from all, and from any others. Else they will not, of course, be distinctive. Napoleon did not stand alone among men, because he was ambitious, and rose from obscurity to the throne of an empire; but because his ambition was aided by an unequalled grasp of thought, and an indomitable personal energy. Oliver Cromwell was not unlike other men, in that he was a victorious general, and a sagacious politician; but in that he was a successful revolutionist, and changed the entire policy of government in a great nation. Washington was not distinguished above all other men, in that he led inferior forces to victory — for other generals have done the same. He was distinguished above other great men for the unknown and still unimitated example of giving up to the people the power which his bravery and wisdom had won.

In like manner, the distinguishing characteristics of men, as religious men, are those peculiar points, in which they differ from other religious men. The Mohammedans are distinguished from other religionists, both christian and

pagan, not in their belief in, and worship of, one God; but because they regard Mohammed as the prophet of God, and the Koran as the word of God. The Roman Catholics are distinguished from other christian sects, not by their forms of worship and scrupulous adherence to an imposing ritual; but by their submission to the Pope's supremacy, and their strange confidence in the infallibility of their church. The Episcopal church, of England and America, is not separated from other Protestant denominations by its creed, nor by its Liturgy; but by its belief in the regular succession and ecclesiastical power of its bishops, and in the wonderful transmission of that power by the imposition of prelatic hands. It is so of all branches of the Church of Christ. They are distinguished from each other by those peculiar points, in which any one of them, differs from all the others. There may be other points of difference, by which one may be distinguished from another; but the distinctive characteristics of any one of them are those peculiarities, by which it differs, not from some one, or two, or three merely, but from all others. Two denominations may differ from each other very widely in their forms of worship, and systems of ecclesiastical policy, and yet coincide in their religious faith; while these points of difference might not be the distinctive characteristics of either, as a separate branch of the Church of Christ. These distinctive characteristics must be found in those single points of difference, by which one body of Christians differs from all other bodies of Christians.

The question is now in place,—What were the distinctive characteristics of our Pilgrim Fathers? What were those lineaments of religious character, which must be distinctly traceable in all who can lay a just claim to be considered their true spiritual descendants? Do we find them in their Trinitarian and Calvinistic faith? This our 'Orthodox' brethren, who claim to be their only legitimate spiritual posterity, assume. But was not the doctrine of

the Trinity an article of the common faith of all Christendom, in the days of the Pilgrims? And was not Calvinism, at that time, held by the Genevan, by the Scotch, and by a large portion of the English Church? How, then, could either Trinitarianism or Calvinism, be the distinctive characteristic of the Pilgrims? That the founders of the Plymouth Colony were the firm adherents to these systems of faith, I do not deny. But neither can it be denied that they held them — the one, in common with all Christendom, the other, in common with the larger portion of the Protestant Church. The Pilgrims were Trinitarians, and Calvinists. The speculations of half christianized philosophers, having gained the ascendant, not by the authority of the Bible, but by the vote of a party, had so eaten into and cauterized the spirit of Christianity, that they had, at length, produced the monstrous conviction that they were a very element of the religion of Jesus. Nor had the Church, in the days of the Pilgrims, shown that quickened activity which made it sensible of the chains which had so long been rusted into its flesh. Hence the Pilgrims had not cast off their spiritual fetters. But these fetters were not the badge by which they were distinguished from other Christians. The whole Church was Trinitarian, and large portions of it were Calvinistic. And hence the Trinitarian and Calvinistic faith could not have been the distinctive characteristic of our Pilgrim Fathers.

It would seem, that conclusions so obvious as these, might somewhat abate the exclusive and complacent spirit with which our Trinitarian brethren claim to be the only true representatives of our Puritan ancestry. And not only is this claim shown to be utterly without support, by these plain deductions, but by another equally gratuitous assumption, upon which it rests. This assumption is, that the Pilgrims, had they lived in the nineteenth, instead of the seventeenth century, would still have been Trinitarians and Calvinists. And what right have any men to

make this assumption? The point involved in it, is one, which, of course, admits of no positive proof, either for or against it. But the probability, I cannot but think, is decidedly against the assumption. The probability is, that men of such an enlarged and liberal spirit — enlarged and liberal for the times in which they lived — had they enjoyed the increased light which has been shed upon their posterity, would have rejected many points of that austere and unscriptural theology, by which their free spirit was held in bondage. And the openly avowed sentiments of these men, well nigh give to this probability the strength of a moral certainty. 'It was the far-reaching observation of Robinson, the Puritan pastor,' says an eloquent living author, 'at that eventful crisis in human affairs, when he dismissed, with religious solemnities, from the shores of the Old World, the pioneers of liberty and religion to the New, that 'the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his Holy Word;' and he besought them to remember it as an article of their church covenant, that they should be ready 'to receive whatsoever light or truth should be made known to them from the written Word of God.' What reasonable doubt can there be, that one, who could thus speak in the beginning of the seventeenth century, would have hailed with joy those higher views of God and of Christianity, which a juster interpretation of the Scriptures has bestowed upon the children of the Pilgrims? Who can believe that he would have resisted the light, which has exhibited the unscriptural and unsubstantial grounds of the doctrine of the Trinity,— that venerable phantom, still holding the church, after so many centuries, in servitude to a heathen philosophy; — or that clearer light, which has dissipated the gloom of Calvinism,— that yellow mist, which, to so many enslaved and timid minds, has obscured the benignant glories of our divine Father? Who can believe, that the Robinson and Brewster of the seventeenth, would have been either Calvinists or Trinitarians, in the nineteenth century?

I dwell upon this point at greater length, because it is one in regard to which Unitarians have suffered, and still suffer, great injustice and unmerited reproach. Our 'Orthodox' brethren regard themselves as the only worthy descendants of the Puritans, because they are Trinitarians and Calvinists. But a Trinitarian and Calvinistic faith can no more properly be regarded as the distinctive characteristic of the Pilgrims, than their views of civil government. The Pilgrims were Trinitarians,—they were Calvinists: and so were they Monarchists. The Royalists of '76 might have claimed to be the only true political descendants of the Pilgrims, with equal justice, and justice of the same kind too, with that of our 'Orthodox' brethren, who set up the exclusive claim to be regarded as their only true spiritual descendants. So were the patriots of the Revolution just as recreant, and recreant in just the same way, from the political faith of the Pilgrims, as Trinitarians are from their religious faith. And what reply would those stern patriots have made to the charge of defection from the principles of their Fathers, brought against them by the haughty Royalists? Would they not, with a just indignation, have answered, and answered rightly,—'True, our Fathers were Monarchists; but they were Monarchists in form, not in spirit. They were Monarchists, because they knew of no better system of government; but such was the enlargedness of their views, and such was their love of liberty, that, had they lived in these times, they would have resisted the tyranny of the throne, and espoused the cause of popular freedom?' And why may not Unitarians, with equal reason, maintain, that, though the Pilgrims were Trinitarians, because all Christendom was then Trinitarian, yet such was their reverence for the Word of God, and disregard of the speculations of men, that they would have embraced joyfully the increased light, which exhibits the human origin of the doctrine of the Trinity, and shows, in its true light, the gloomy repulsiveness of the Genevan faith?

This point being settled, that the distinctive characteristics of the Pilgrims are not to be found in their Trinitarian and Calvinistic faith, the question,—What, then, were those characteristics? is one of easy solution. Our Pilgrim Fathers did not exile themselves from their homes and their native land, in order to impose a creed upon their posterity, which should hold the church in spiritual bondage, and effectually hinder the progress of religious knowledge. Such was not their purpose. They made those noble sacrifices, as the pioneers of civil and religious liberty. Oppressed by a bigoted hierarchy,—derided and abused by the insolence of an irreligious and licentious Court, those children of God sought an asylum for freedom of thought and the rights of conscience in the wilds of the Western World, and planted the seeds of future glory upon the shores of New England. The distinguishing principles maintained by the founders of the Plymouth Colony,—those principles which gave them their peculiar and distinctive character were these,—simplicity in the forms of worship and in the management of ecclesiastical affairs, and the right of a private interpretation of the Scriptures. They did not leave England and Holland for the purpose of bequeathing to the New World and perpetuating upon it a doctrinal creed, guarded by the penal sanctions of excommunication and *anathemas*. Such men our Pilgrim Fathers were not. They fled across the ocean as the simple disciples of Jesus Christ, and for the simple purpose of enjoying the privileges of Congregational forms of worship and church policy, and the right of private judgment in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Their Trinitarianism and Calvinism were the doctrinal peculiarities of their times, not of the Pilgrims themselves. Their distinctive characteristics were, that they were Congregationalists, and the liberal Christians of the times. They came to these shores not to protect and perpetuate a unity of faith, but to maintain unmolested, a Christian purity of life. The settlement of

doctrinal disputes, and the guarding of a speculative theology was, with them, a matter of less serious concern, than the illustration of the beauty and power of practical Christianity. It was not for the 'Orthodoxy' of their faith, but for the purity of their Christian life, that the honorable name, which was designed by their profligate persecutors to be a term of reproach, was appropriated to them. They were called '*Puritans*,' not because they were Calvinists or Trinitarians, but because they regarded purity of heart and life as of vastly higher moment than a formal and blind assent to a doctrinal creed. The Word of God, interpreted by private judgment, was their only creed.* They sought in the New, what was denied to

* I am indebted to the Rev. H. A. Miles, of this city, for the following copy of the Covenant of the First Church in Plymouth, which he extracted from the Records of the church, and which was declared by the church in 1676, to be 'the substance of that Covenant,' which their fathers entered into, 'at the first gathering of the church.'

'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in obedience to his holy will and divine ordinances, we, being by the most wise and good providence of God, brought together in this place, and desirous to unite ourselves into one congregation or church under the Lord Jesus Christ our Head, that it may in such sort as becometh all those who are redeemed and sanctified to himself, we do hereby solemnly and religiously, and as in his most holy presence, avouch the Lord Jehovah, the only true God, to be our God, and the God of ours; and do promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rules of his Gospel, and in all sincere conformity to his holy ordinances, and in mutual love to, and watchfulness over, one another, depending wholly and only upon the Lord our God, to enable us by his grace hereunto.'

Such was the only *Creed* of the Pilgrims, and I know of no Unitarians who could not conscientiously subscribe to it. The Covenant of which it is 'the substance,' was made on board the 'Mayflower,' and has not been preserved.

The following is the Covenant of the 'Church of the Pilgrims,' in this city. How far it differs from the Covenant of the Pilgrims of the 'Mayflower,' the reader will decide.

'In presenting yourself for admission into this Christian Church, you do publicly avow your belief that the Word of God, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is an Authoritative Rule of Faith, and Guide of Life.

'You express a desire to accept salvation, as it is revealed in the Gospel, looking for the Mercy of God unto Eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

'You purpose, in humble reliance upon 'grace to help in time of need,' to lead 'a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.'

'You also covenant to walk with this Church in a regular observance of Christian Ordinances, in the exercise of Christian Charity, and in the maintenance of Christian Order; earnestly praying that God will bless the relation into which we now enter, and that we may be so sustained and assisted in our Christian duties, that, being built up in the Faith and Practice of our Holy Religion, we may be prepared for 'an inheritance among them that are sanctified' in heaven.'

them in the Old World,— freedom from religious domination,— that worst of tyrannies, which interposes the opinions of men between the Bible and private judgment, and the authority of men between the conscience and God. This freedom they sought for and enjoyed upon the shores of New England, and then left to their posterity the rich legacy of religious and civil liberty.

> 'Not as the warriors come,
> They, the true-hearted came;
> Not with the sound of the rolling drum,
> And the trumpet, that speaks of fame.
> Aye, call it holy ground,
> The spot where first they trod: —
> They left unchanged what there they found,
> Freedom to worship God.'

And who, now, are the true descendants of such an ancestry? Who bear the truest spiritual likeness, not to the times in which the Pilgrims lived, but the Pilgrims themselves, as the distinguished Christians of those times? Shall this enviable distinction be quietly given up to those who lay an exclusive claim to it, on the ground that they still accept, not a faith which was peculiar to the Pilgrims, but the common faith of the church from the beginning of the fourth down to the eighteenth century? For one, I earnestly protest against such an exclusive appropriation. I not only call in question the assumption on which it is made,— I distinctly declare it to be a false assumption. I will not deny, that the Trinitarian and the Calvinist may be the true spiritual sons of the Pilgrims; for such a denial would betray an exclusiveness, not less Christian than their own. But this may be said, in all truth and charity, that they are the true spiritual descendants of the Pilgrims, only in so far as they have inherited the catholic and liberal spirit of the Pilgrims. We will not deny to our brethren of a different faith, the privileges, the enjoyment of which we claim as our own indisputable right. Neither will we allow unsupported claims to impinge against our Christian right, without lifting up the voice of earnest remonstrance. Shall we be told, that, as a denomination of Christians, we have no right to claim

a spiritual kindred with the heroes of Plymouth Rock, and tacitly allow it to pass for truth? Shall it be charged upon us, as '*travesty*,' by those of a different faith, and regarded as of questionable propriety, by those of our own, that we venture to assert a right, which is generally denied to us, because we so generally acquiesce in the denial?

If by a true spiritual kindred we are united to Christ, it is indeed of little moment whether or not we have affinities with the Pilgrim Fathers. To be Christians is of a greater moment far, than to be Puritans or Pilgrims. But if the Pilgrims were distinguished for their peculiar affinities with Christ, and if we choose to honor them by calling ourselves by their name, shall we allow that our right to do so is an unlawful usurpation? Shall they, who are distinguished for their religious liberty in the nineteenth century, be denied the right of honoring the apostles of religious liberty of the seventeenth century? Let the reflecting and the candid decide. The question of spiritual relationship, in this case, is not to be settled by our speculative faith, but by our spirit and our life. And all must admit, I think, that they who, departing from the doctrinal belief, yet exhibit the Christian spirit, and maintain the Christian life of the Pilgrims, bear as true a resemblance to those men, as they who inherit their faith, but repudiate their spirit.

We claim, then, to be the true spiritual descendants of the Pilgrims, because we take the Word of God — because we take Christ alone, as our creed — our only authoritative rule of faith, and guide of life. We allow not the authority of men to intervene between our consciences and God, nor the opinions of men to come between our own understanding and the Word of God. We regard all such interferences as an abridgment of 'the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.' In the interpretation of the Scriptures, we leave every man to the free exercise of his own conscience and powers of thought, and to the

guidance of the Spirit of God. Claiming for ourselves the largest religious liberty — holding ourselves amenable to God alone in matters of faith — we concede the same liberty to others. We question no man upon his doctrinal belief. We do not ask whether a man be Calvinist or Arminian, whether he be Trinitarian or Sabellian, whether he be Lutheran or Arian, whether he belong to this or to that school of theology. These questions all have their interest. But there is a question of still greater moment, and it is the only one that we ask — is he a true Christian? We open wide the arms of our Christian fellowship, and would gladly circle within them all who follow the example, and breathe the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have our religious faith; we hold it dear; and we are glad when our views coincide with the opinions of other thinking and free minds. But we regard the state of the heart, and the character of the life, of far higher moment than the cold and inoperative assent to any articles of faith. We have one Master, even Christ; and all who are his true disciples we hail as brethren. We profess to be governed by the liberal and catholic spirit of the Gospel, and for this reason we call ourselves the 'Church of the Pilgrims.'

Again, we regard ourselves as the true descendants of the Pilgrims, because we respect our own consciences, and our honest convictions of truth and duty, more highly than the approval and favor of men; and have a greater dread of falsifying these convictions, than we have of the *anathemas* of other Christian sects, and excommunication from their fellowship. We attach no light value to the good opinion of our brethren of other denominations. Gladly would we fraternize with them, were we allowed the privilege of so doing. And deeply do we regret the prevalence of that exclusive spirit, which we cannot but regard as uncongenial with the spirit of Christ, and which excludes us from communion with those whom, we doubt not, we shall meet in the Church of Heaven. But when

the matter comes to this issue, that we must either falsify our honest convictions, or forfeit the privilege of fellowship with our brethren, no freedom of choice is left to us. We dare not be untrue to our own consciences, and the decisions of our own judgment. Sorrowful, indeed, it is, not to be recognised by our brethren as Christians, and to be regarded by them as traitors to Christianity; but this does not affect our relations to God. Exclusion and reproach we are able to endure. But we are not able to endure the consequences of professing to accept as truths of God, what we honestly believe to be the speculations of men. We cannot profess a conformity to creeds and confessions, which we believe to be unauthorized by the teaching of Christ and his apostles. Like our Pilgrim Fathers, we take our stand upon the Word of God, as it speaks to our own mind and heart, and, like them, we must suffer our name to be 'cast out as evil,' rather than compromise our religious convictions. And for this reason, we choose to be called the 'Church of the Pilgrims.'

We likewise claim kindred with the founders of the New England Churches, because our desire and aim is to copy the life and spirit of those heroic men, in so far as they followed Christ. Nor was their indomitable love of liberty, civil and religious, a more distinguishing feature of their character, than their scrupulous caution, that freedom of thought might not degenerate into looseness of morals. Not less severe were the virtues of their life, than they were unconstrained in the exercise of their religious opinions. The Pilgrims were patterns of practical godliness. Living in daily communion with God, and their minds subdued by a living belief in the realities of another life, they were shining illustrations of the excellence of pure religion. In these respects we would copy their example.

True it doubtless is, that their scrupulousness in morals led them towards the extreme of asceticism. But they lived in a corrupt age; and, understanding but imperfectly

the genial spirit of the Gospel, it is not strange that, in escaping the errors of the degenerate times in which they lived, they should fall into an austerity of manners, and show a disregard of the social amenities of life, with which the true spirit of Christianity has no sympathy. And it must be admitted that, even in such an extreme, they were far more worthy of imitation than the worldly and corrupt Church which despised and persecuted them. But we call ourselves the 'Church of the Pilgrims,' not that we may imitate them in their errors and follies, but in their unquestionable and sterling excellences. Be it ours to avoid the one, and copy the other. Like them, let us be careful that our freedom of thought and opinion do not weaken our sense of the practical obligations of Christianity. Let us show to the world that, while we have an intelligent doctrinal belief, which we do not hold in light esteem, we still attach a higher value to purity of heart and probity of life. And if we suffer reproach and reviling because we claim spiritual kindred with the founders of the New England Churches, let the injustice of such treatment be demonstrated by our Christ-like spirit and Christ-like life. Let it be ever our aim to receive the doctrines of Christianity as they were expounded by the 'Great Teacher,' and be hallowed by its spirit, as that spirit was embodied in the life of Christ. And thus let us show why we call ourselves the 'Church of the Pilgrims.'

New England's Glory and Crown.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT PLYMOUTH, MASS.,

DECEMBER 22, 1848.

BY SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, D. D.,
Pastor of the Tabernacle Church, Salem.

Second Edition.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 24 CONGRESS STREET.
1849.

It has been designed in the following pages, to exhibit "The Pilgrims" and "The Fathers," in their true evangelical spirit; and to present a rapid, yet distinct outline of the ecclesiastical history of New England, in somewhat more of a *missionary* point of view, than has been common. Some passages of the Discourse were omitted, at the time it was delivered.

The day was very unfavorable for a large gathering, and but a small number assembled in the house of God. There were just about as many present, as the whole number of the emigrants, who came in the Mayflower; which, some may forget, was one hundred and one. But there was a grandeur in the scene, as the storm sounded from the ocean and above the summits of the hills, which few would venture to describe. All nature around seemed to unite in the celebration of the "Landing of the Pilgrims." No one who joined in the religious exercises, could have needed much aid to his imagination and sensibilities, as he silently remembered those, whom he had come to honor,—when,

> 'Amidst the storm they sang,
> And the stars heard and the sea!
> And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
> To the anthem of the free!'

DISCOURSE.

PROVERBS, xvii. 6.

CHILDREN'S CHILDREN ARE THE CROWN OF OLD MEN, AND THE GLORY OF CHILDREN ARE THEIR FATHERS.

In respect to human happiness and glory, there is a remarkable difference between the words of the "holy men who of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and those of other men generally, whatever their land or their language. Other men speak of happiness, without any reference to "joy in God," or "delight in his law"; and of glory, when the Most High, who only is "great," "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working," "is not in all their thoughts" of greatness, of wisdom, and of excellency. But they, who, "at sundry times and in divers manners," have spoken of happiness and glory, in the name of the "Father of lights" and "the God of comfort," always speak of *happiness*, as but "the pleasure of sin," and of *glory*, as but "a vain show" and a fatal delusion, unless the "soul doth magnify the Lord," and the "spirit rejoice in God" the "Saviour."

It is, therefore, undoubtedly to be understood, that the "old men" who would find the "crown" of their earthly satisfactions and hopes in "children's children," were those pre-eminently, who had feared the Lord from their youth, and whose "hoary head was a crown of glory," because "found in the way of righteousness." And while

the ancient people of God accounted a numerous family and posterity a very special and signal favor, it was one of the most dreadful of all bitter experiences, to have sons and daughters, whose vicious and impious conduct would bring down their "grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." Hence "children's children" could never be the "crown" of the "old men," whom God would "not cast off in their old age,"—unless they "walked in the statutes and ordinances of the law of the Lord," and gave promise of transmitting the legacy of a godly example to their own "children's children."

"A man's descendants," says one of our wisest commentators, "ought to be his honor and comfort in old age. His children should be educated in such a manner, as may warrant a confidence that their pious and prudent conduct will render them such, and that they will train up their families in like manner; and it is the duty of children, and children's children, to consult the credit of their progenitors, as far as it can be made consistent with superior obligations. Parents also should act in such a manner, that their children and posterity may be respected for their sakes, and have cause to rejoice in their relation to persons of such piety and wisdom. And thus it will be, in proportion as men attend to the dictates of heavenly wisdom."

In this free exposition of the spirit of the significant and beautiful language of the text, we have, as I conceive, a just and interesting view of the relation of children to parents, and of posterity to their ancestors. Natural talents and dispositions are very far from being always hereditary. Yet we often perceive as marked a likeness of intellectual endowments and original elements of character, between a parent and his offspring, and between progenitors and their progeny, as we ever see of correspondence and resemblance in the features of countenance, which unequivocally proclaim kindred blood and

a common lineage. And while "that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," by a divine and not a human generation, we are so instructed by the "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," and by the history of Providence, in respect to the covenant with Abraham, comprehending all believers in Christ among the Gentiles as well as the Jews,—that it should be accounted no strange thing, but a delightful fulfilment of the promises, if children, in this our beloved New England, should be found partakers of the richest of all the blessings of a God of love. And this too by their relation, not merely to parents, friends and benefactors whom they have seen and known, but to those fore-*fathers* and fore-*mothers*, who, for our sakes, and for God's purposes, endured so much, and who have long since been translated from the duties, responsibilities, and trials of earth to a glorified immortality in heaven.

The nations of this Western hemisphere and of the Old world, are now a spectacle of extraordinary interest to every intelligent and reflecting man in this country. We have hopes or fears, or hopes *and* fears, for our own, and for other lands. These are different in different individuals, but in all are materially affected by personal religious principles and opinions. We may be unanimous in believing and proclaiming our own, our "native land, of every land the pride," while yet we may widely differ, when we trace our distinction as a people, to its real origin or source, through all the connected agencies, circumstances, and influences. And as we judge of our own land, in its early history and its present and prospective condition, so are we likely to judge of the state and prospects of those kingdoms or republics, which are now as "raging waves of the sea;" and so are we likely to determine what may be our duty, as a nation, or as individuals, at this eventful conjuncture of the world's affairs.

In general terms, we refer to our ancestors and to the institutions which the Pilgrims and the Fathers of New

England have founded and cherished, when we would explain the peculiar characteristics of their descendants, and rationally account for the manifold and unequalled excellency of "our goodly heritage." Some will make this reference, but with very large reservations, if not very significant and somewhat inconsistent qualifications. There are those who will "garnish the sepulchres" of the "Pilgrims" of Plymouth Rock, and the "Fathers" * their associates of Salem, Charlestown, Boston, and other primitive settlements; while they are slow to recognize the true secret of the moral worth, and energy, and endurance, by which those godly sires achieved their noble deeds and won their renowned conquests and possessions. There are theorists and dreamers, who would have all forsake "the old paths," and enter upon one or another individual or social experiment, in full confidence of a progress and happiness, which no received form of Christianity can ever secure or promote. On the other hand, we have those, and I bless God that the number is not small, who are more and more persuaded, that it was the distinctive faith, and the life inspired by that faith, of our ancestors, to which, under the watchful and beneficent care of their covenant God, we are now indebted for all that makes the difference between New England and New Grenada, or between Massachusetts and Mexico. It is believed also, with all the confidence of a self-evident certainty, that to the same causes we are to ascribe the marvellous contrast of the American Revolution to the first revolution in France, and to all the other revolutions which have followed, on either side of the Atlantic.

If we differ in regard to the leading and legitimate causes, which, working out their effects in past genera-

* Those who came to Plymouth are properly called "*The Pilgrims*";—because they had sojourned in Holland. We speak of them as "the Fathers." But "the Fathers" were not all "Pilgrims."

tions, have crowned the present with its chief blessing and glory, we shall of course differ in our judgment of the best means and aims, for the highest good of the generations which shall come after us. In our amazing increase of territory and population, we have some startling questions to be settled, in respect to which we must act in our political capacity, as citizens. But it is to me a great comfort to know, that there is a Power and Wisdom above all mortal power and policy; and that whatever rulers or statesmen may decree, or may strive to accomplish, He who says to the ocean billows—"Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further,"—will, in his faithfulness and loving kindness, and in his own sovereign right and appointed time, extend the dominion of truth and holiness; and will multiply, by thousands of thousands, the FREEMEN, who can shout the triumphs and rejoice in the felicities of "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Of all that have ever lived, there have never been any, upon the broad face of the earth, who more devoutly, than the "old men," our *fathers'* fathers, adopted the true sentiment of the words, that "children's children are the crown of old men." They are such, be it remembered, not by their numbers, or wealth, or worldly eminence, but *by serving their generation according to the will of God;* or by cherishing and spreading the institutions and influences of that kingdom, which is established in the hearts of the "faithful in Christ Jesus." And the day is far distant, before any who reverence the memory of illustrious progenitors, will have more reason than ourselves, to respond their loud AMEN to the words—"And the glory of children are their fathers!"

From the character of the Fathers of New England, and from the history of their children and "children's children," I propose to show, that, in accordance with the genuine import of the sacred aphorism of the text,—we

have the most grateful occasion to praise God, both for the "Glory" and the "Crown."

For a long period, America was to Christians of Europe the great field of *missionary* effort. It is even maintained, that the inspiring idea of Columbus was derived from the prophecies; and that Isabella, his patron, made the conversion of the heathen an object "paramount to all the rest." When our Fathers came hither, these were all "*foreign parts:*" it was all *heathen* ground. Long after their coming, the churches in England were accustomed to pray in their songs:—

> "Dark *America* convert,
> And every pagan land."

And if I do not mistake, these lines are still sung, strangely as they sound to the ear of a New England man who may chance to hear them. So vast is the change; so accustomed are we to our Christian institutions; that we are all in danger of forgetting that we live upon the soil that has been rescued from Paganism. *Never, never should it be forgotten!* And never should it be forgotten, that the settlement of New England was in reality, though not in name, a Missionary Enterprise. Or if you please to call it by other terms, you may call it *a Mission of Evangelical Colonization;* and you may proclaim it in every language, as the sublimest mission of modern times.

The History of New England is yet to be written. Posterity may, perhaps, do justice to the memory of our Fathers. But it is incumbent on their living "children's children" to acquaint themselves with their character, and never be unmindful of their extraordinary virtues and achievements. Those persecuted and exiled Puritans had no such purpose in coming hither, as has often been ascribed to them, even by some of their favored descendants. It was not for political immunities, nor republican institutions. In the "love of Christ constraining" them,

it was for the advancement of that *Reformation*, which, a century after it had moved all Christendom, was still but in part accomplished; for they were not satisfied, that the "Prince of life" should only be acknowledged by the church, in his prophetical and priestly offices. It was, that as "the Lord's freemen," they might give him his KINGLY RIGHT, and thus be "complete in him, which is the Head of all principality and power." It was, that in the "liberty," "wherewith the Son makes free," they might enjoy the gospel, without "human mixtures and temptations;" and worship in peace, "while worshipping in spirit and in truth." It was for the holier and surer training of a consecrated progeny, at the distance of a "nine hundred league ocean," from the corruptions of the old world. And not least of all in their desires and hopes, was the salvation of the benighted heathen, while in every way which should be prepared before them, they would toil and pray for the enlargement of the kingdom of "the Lord of all."*

These were their motives and ends in separating themselves from the Church of England, which originally adopted the Reformation from paramount purposes of state policy. Above all things, it was in their hearts to call no man master, but to obey HIM as their King, whose inspired word was their sun, and whose atoning blood was their eternal life. For *this* it was, that in the pure and undying "love of their espousals," they "went after him in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." And in their own graphic expression, it was indeed in a "wilderness world," that they built their habitations and their sanctuaries. For an object, holy and sublime as ever angels celebrated, they lived here in hunger and in cold, and toiled and watched in weariness and in painfulness; where, when the bullock lowed, the wild beast answered him; and where, at the rustling of a leaf, the fond mother

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* See Appendix, A.

clasped her infant closer to her bosom. All the charters enjoined upon the colonists the duty of instructing and christianizing the pagan aborigines. The seal of the Massachusetts colony is a true exponent of the aims and aspirations of our fathers. In expressive harmony with their benignant desires, they adopted the figure of an aboriginal, with the memorable words of "the man of Macedonia." Nothing, therefore, was further from their hearts than the wish or the thought of colonizing an immense "howling wilderness," and redeeming it for "a goodly heritage," at the price of the blood of the children of its forests and its streams. And if the venerated Robinson had occasion to write to the Governor of Plymouth,—'O that you had converted some, before you had killed any,'—it was not because these were wantonly destroyed, or hunted down as "tawny and bloody salvages;" nor because their moral ignorance and wretchedness were not a distinct object of early and intense solicitude. In less than two years, I think it was, one of the Plymouth settlers was specially designated to promote the conversion of the Indians.

In the labors of several pastors before Eliot and the first Mayhew, as well as in the more celebrated exertions of these devoted evangelists, and in the contributions and personal sacrifices of those who out of their "deep poverty" sustained them, the first generation of New England furnished examples of as self-denying and exalted missionary spirit, as has ever yet found a record or a memorial in the uninspired annals of redemption. And to all appearance, we may ourselves hardly expect to see the day, when "the thousand of thousands" shall become as "the little one" was, and the "strong nation" as "the small one," in the all-pervading and ennobling power of such zeal, for the salvation of the perishing.

The honor of the first plan in England, for sending missionaries to the heathen, has by mistake been given to

that wonderful man, whose character is now at last receiving a just and brilliant vindication, against the atrocious calumnies, which have prevailed for two centuries. But the magnificent design of Cromwell, which contemplated the establishment of a Council for the Protestant religion, in opposition to the jesuitical combination at Rome, and which was intended to embrace the East and West Indies, in its fourth department of operation,—was more than thirty years later, than the manifesto of the Pilgrims,—declaratory of the "great hope and inward zeal they had, of laying some good foundation for the propagation and advancement of the gospel in these remote parts of the world"!

A Society had been formed in England, and collections had been taken, in aid of the missions of Eliot and his associates. It is beyond a doubt, that the *first settlers of New England* were the *first Englishmen*, who devised and executed a mission to the heathen!

As early as 1646, the Legislature of Massachusetts passed an act for the propagation of the gospel among the Indians. From that day onward, more or less of legislative provision has been made for their religious instruction, as well as their social comfort. And it may be remarked in a word, that with all the changes that have passed over the "fathers" and the "children's children," there never has been a time, when they have not furnished some laborers in the heathen part of this western world.*

As it respects *the religious faith* of the Fathers of New England, there can be no good reason for any misunderstanding, mistake, or misstatement. They were Trinitarians and Calvinists, intelligently, thoroughly, and most earnestly. In church government, they were much per-

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* See Appendix, B.

plexed, in shaping their mould of Congregationalism, so as to be neither Brownists or Independents, nor Presbyterians. A great and arduous work it was which fashioned and executed the Cambridge Platform of 1648;—according to which, mainly and substantially, we have the prevailing ecclesiastical polity of New England.

Some turbulent and innovating spirits, like Roger Williams, bewildered enthusiasts like the antinomian Ann Hutchinson, and incomprehensible schismatics like the pestilent Gorton, made no small trouble by their opposition to the earliest civil and religious order of the Massachusetts Colony. But out of more than seventy ministers among a population of thirty thousand, there is no reason to suppose, that there was a single one, who did not receive the doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as one God; or who did not receive as well as avow, most openly and decidedly, the fundamental doctrines of the present faith of our evangelical Congregational churches.

It was to a few individuals among the laity, beyond a doubt, that Edward Johnson refers, who, as early as 1654, had published the fact, which I here notice, without any invidious intent, that, besides the *Antinomians*, *Familists*, *Conformitants*, and *Seekers*, "there were *Arrians*, *Arminians*, and *Quakers*."

A most egregious and singular error has been committed in representing the founders of the First Church in Salem,—the first, as I need not say, in the Massachusetts Colony,—as having organized themselves, without any Confession of Faith; and as having had a form of Covenant, designedly so framed, as to give liberty to all, who might choose to call themselves *Christians*, to enter their communion and fellowship. What has been generally printed, for a hundred and fifty years, as the First Covenant of that Church, and adopted Aug. 6, 1629, *is not that Cove-*

nant. It was adopted as a Special Covenant, in 1636.—The Covenant of 1629 was a very brief and comprehensive document, by which the signers pledged themselves to walk together in obedience to the rules of the Gospel; while the "Confession of Faith" was as explicit and decided,—*Trinitarian and Calvinistic*,—as would of course be expected from men, who would rather have been burnt at the stake, than have given the least occasion for a doubt, concerning their interpretation of "the faith once delivered to the saints."

The error in respect to the Covenant, commonly printed as the First Covenant in the Massachusetts Colony,—was discovered a few years ago, during an investigation of the history of the Tabernacle Church, a Church which originated in a secession from the First Church, in 1735. Soon afterwards, a printed copy was found of the Confession and Covenant, *for substance*, as adopted in Salem, 6th of August, 1629. It is the identical document, which was printed for the use of the churches, when they so generally renewed their covenant in 1680; and when the design was, as far as possible, to unite all together in one common concert of recognition of the doctrinal and practical sentiments of the venerable Church, of which Higginson and Skelton were jointly pastor and teacher, and of which Endicott, the first Governor of Massachusetts Colony, was a leading member.

Hugh Peters was the pastor of the First Church, in Salem, at the time the Covenant was propounded and adopted, which has so unaccountably passed into so many "Historical Collections" and discourses, as if that of 1629. The evidence that it was a new covenant, which was required by the disorders occasioned more especially by the movements of Roger Williams, is perfectly conclusive. And as the very preamble, as well as other *internal* evidence, is so palpably against the idea of its being the *first* Covenant,—it would seem to be most ex-

traordinary, that so important an error of history should have been committed and blindly perpetuated.*

With the doctrines of Arius and Pelagius, of Arminius and Socinus, and with all the prominent objections to the Trinitarian and Calvinistic faith, the first pastors and members of the New England churches were no less, if not more perfectly acquainted, than at the present day are pastors and members of the churches generally, which are built upon the same foundation.—Those early ministers had been educated in the English universities, and had been called to investigate every article of their religious belief,—with every advantage which was needed for a correct judgment.

When in 1648, the ministers of the four Colonies of Plymouth, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Haven, (as the Colonies were then geographically divided and named,) assembled in the Synod at Cambridge, "their learning, their holiness, their purity struck all men that knew them, with admiration. They were Timothies in their houses, Chrysostoms in their pulpits, and Augustines in their disputations." Such was the witness of the venerable John Higginson, of the First Church in Salem, and of William Hubbard of Ipswich, who, at the time they wrote, near the close of the seventeenth century, were the two oldest ministers of New England.

The idea, which some have attempted to disseminate, —that our fathers lived in a dark age, and would not have been what they were in their denominational sentiments, if they had lived at a later period, for example, in our times, has not the least foundation in history or in reason. It might just as well be asserted and argued, that they would have been atheistical transcendentalists or Fourierites, as that, in any essential point, they would have been otherwise than what they were, namely,—avowed

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* See Appendix, C.

and firm believers in the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines!—And it has been stated as a fact, which speaks whole volumes in few words,—that, for one hundred and fifty years, such a wretched creature, such a living monstrosity, as an *infidel*, was not known among their children!

How could they have been otherwise than they were, with their holy reverence for the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament throughout, as the inspired Word of God; as the infallible repository of their faith and the rules of their life in Christ; and as the ultimate appeal in all questions of theology and of morals? The Bible they exalted above all things human. They were "not ashamed of the Gospel," any more than was Paul. They "gloried in the cross." They "sanctified the Lord God in their hearts;" and were "ready always to give an answer to every man that asked a reason of the hope that was in" them, "with meekness and fear,"—*fear of God*, not that "fear of man" which "bringeth a snare." They were *honest*, as every one must admit, who knows anything of them,—and were most *hearty* in all which they professed to believe, in answer to the question,—"What saith the Scripture?"

With special allusion to the early ministers, it was written a century and a half since;—"Indeed the ministers of New England have this to recommend them unto a good regard with the crown of England, that the most flourishing plantation in all the American dominions of that crown, is more owing to *them* than to any sort of men whatever." They well deserved that eulogium. It is almost impossible to estimate their influence upon the world, in an epoch which Merle D'Aubigné has characterized as "one of the most important in modern times, so far as concerns the new developments of nations."

At no time, since the settlement of the country, have the people at large had so much, probably, of direct pas-

toral supervision, as in the first years of the colonies. A number of the churches, though quite small, had in effect two pastors, one of whom, called *Teacher*, had it in charge to discourse of systematic theology, rather than deliver words of "exhortation," upon matters of daily Christian practice. And of more than one, doubtless, it might have been said, as it was of a pastor in the neighborhood of Salem,—that "he was a tree of knowledge laden with fruit, *which the children could reach.*"

By the laws of the Massachusetts Colony, all dwellings must be located within half a mile, or at farthest within a mile, of the place of worship. This was doubtless for mutual defence against the Indians, when almost every man carried his fire-arms to the sanctuary, as well as into the field of his labor; also for the greater convenience of assembling on the Lord's day, and for the weekly lecture of Thursday, which was of hardly less account than the services of the Sabbath. There was thus a more frequent and intimate communion with one another as of the same "household of God," and fellow-citizens of "the commonwealth of Israel." This was a very different mode of living from that of the Southern colonists, upon scattered plantations.

At the first, the greater part of adults, both male and female, were church-members, by profession of hope in Christ, as pardoned and renewed. There were delightful seasons of special awakening in those days; and in some of the churches, as in that of Cambridge, under the ministry of Thomas Shepard, it was expected as a matter of course, that some new cases of conviction, if not of conversion, would be manifest every Sabbath.

So indispensable was family prayer to the order of every dwelling, that you might have visited a hundred or several hundred contiguous families in succession, without finding one, in which the morning and evening sacrifice were not offered. For a long period, exceptions were

extremely few. And would, that in our day, those who offer prayer in the family, in the closet, and in other places, were, in as great a proportion, as strong as were the fathers in the faith of the Abrahamic covenant, and all the promises to God's people!

"Prayer and preaching were the living principle of their institutions; special prayer upon special emergencies, with the confident expectation of direct and specific answers; preaching, the most plain and pungent, enforcing those peculiar doctrines of grace which humble man and exalt God, and which have in every age been made powerful to 'the pulling down of strong holds.' There was much also in the state of their infant settlements to favor the desired results. They were a world within themselves, cut off by their distance and poverty from most of the alluring objects which seize on the hearts of the unconverted in a more advanced state of society. They were all of one faith [in every vital point]; there was none among them to question or deny the necessity of a work of the Spirit; and the minds of their children were prepared, by their early religious training, to bow submissive under the sacred influence. In these circumstances, how natural was it to multiply the means of grace, upon any appearance of increased seriousness; to press with redoubled zeal and frequency to the throne of God in prayer; to urge their children and dependents, with all the fervor of Christian affection, to seize the golden opportunity, and 'make their calling and election sure'; to remove, as far as possible, every obstacle of business or amusement out of the way; and to concentrate the entire interest of their little communities on the one object of the soul's salvation! How natural that these labors and prayers should be blessed of God; that the truth preached under these circumstances should be made, like 'the fire and the hammer, to break in pieces the flinty rock'; that extraordinary effusions of the Holy Spirit should be granted,

and that there should be an 'awakening,' as it was then called, or, in modern language, a REVIVAL OF RELIGION."*

There were some sad departures from a strict and close walk with God; and flagrant instances of breach of church covenant. New England was better far than the Goshen of Egypt, but it was no part of the garden of Eden, from which "God drove out the man," from whom our fathers had their descent. Of the general state of morals, however, in a comprehensive view, we shall probably not be much misled, if we draw our inferences from the witness of an intelligent contemporary, who, with the prejudices of the Church Establishment in the mother country, resided a few years in New England, previous to 1641. According to him, one might spend a year in going from place to place, and not "see a drunkard, or hear an oath, or see a beggar"! †

As the statutes of the Mosaic code were taken as the general laws of the colonists, the Sabbath was begun at sunset on Saturday evening. It was observed also with great strictness, in all domestic arrangements and duties. And it was, as many may not be fully aware, *the strictness of the observance of the Sabbath*, as compared with the practice on the Continent and in Great Britain, from which, more than from any other difference, the *Puritans* first obtained their specific name.

"It was happy for our progenitors," said the late amiable and accomplished Dr. Kirkland, in his discourse delivered at Plymouth, forty-five years since,—"that they brought with them into the wilderness the confidential associates of their domestic labors and domestic cares. Throughout their arduous enterprise, they experienced the inexpressible value of that conjugal friendship, which no change of fortune can weaken or interrupt; in which

* C. A. Goodrich, D. D., in Baird's "Religion in America," p. 197.
† Thomas Lechford.

'tenderness is heightened by distress, and attachment cemented by the tears of sorrow.' The family society began with the civil and ecclesiastical society. Family religion and order began with the family society. To Him who had directed them in a right way for themselves, for their little ones, and for all their substance, 'the saint, the father and the husband' was accustomed to offer in the presence of his household his daily and nightly sacrifices of praise. Regular and beautiful was the church, in which he who ministered, had only to place in order in the building, those materials, which parents had previously framed and adjusted to his house."

I need only allude to the early establishment of free schools, that every child might be taught the elements of what is understood by "popular education";—and for the express purpose, that all might be able to read for themselves the Word of God, and be fortified against the machinations, both of Papacy and Prelacy, in particular, and of all the pretences and allurements of "false apostles" in general. And within ten years after the beginning of the permanent settlements in Massachusetts, the College at Cambridge was established, that "the children of the old men" might not fail of a supply of pastors, who would "feed the flock of God," "with knowledge and understanding." *

It was eminently of divine favor, that so many learned, evangelical, and eloquent ministers arrived in New England before 1640. Some few of them went back at the time of the civil wars, and after the establishment of the Commonwealth, under Cromwell. Such was the change of times, it has been quaintly recorded,—"that instead of *Old England's* driving its best people into New, it was itself turned into New." During the troubles at home, opportunity was given for the progress of the experi-

* See Appendix, D.

mental institutions of the colonists, to a maturity of consolidation, which could bid defiance, though not without some misgiving of alarm, to the insidious and deadly machinations of the profligate court and the godless hierarchy of Charles II. And from that day to the present, it is undeniable, that the mother country has experienced an incessant and most powerful reaction upon herself, of the principles and the example of the exiled founders of the mighty fabric, which is now the wonder of all nations.

But of the first ministers, who, under the pressure of intolerance, or in despair of the progress of the Reformation in their native island, came to these "foreign parts," and to a pagan and savage wilderness of an extent unknown and unimagined, by far the greater part remained, died among their own people, and were gathered by devout men to their burial, amidst lamentations and gratulations. They displayed a faith in God, as a Rewarder, an energy in view of obstacles, a constancy under discouragements, and a fortitude in suffering, which are beyond all human praise or reward.

And, my brethren, if *we* would inherit the same promises, which sustained them so triumphantly to the last, we shall be slow to forget, that, from the ordinance of Heaven, a New England was originated by self-denial for Christ's supremacy; implicit reliance upon the witness of the Holy Scriptures, to the utter exclusion of all "philosophy and vain deceit;" a well-educated and truly pious ministry, who "shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God;" sound Calvinistic doctrine, fearlessly addressed to the understanding and the conscience; prayer without ceasing, like that at Bethel, at Carmel, and in "the upper room" at Jerusalem; family religion, with a confiding, grateful self-application of the Abrahamic covenant; fraternal or congregational independence of the churches; universal instruction, literary and Chris-

tian ; and the remembrance of the Lord's day, according to the Fourth Commandment, in its original import, and as written by the "finger of God," for an everlasting statute and memorial.

It is, as I regard it, a most instructive fact of our early history, that the period during which the "*old* ministers" flourished in New England, was most remarkable for prayer of Puritan fathers and mothers, on both sides of the Atlantic, that all those who were "bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh" might be "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty." They deprecated as the direst of curses "a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters." "No greater joy" could they have, than "to see their children walking in the truth." And many were the supplications of the pastors, like that of the venerable Higginson and Hubbard, at the close of the century in which New England began,—"that God would raise up from time to time, those who may be the happy instruments of *bringing down the hearts of the parents into the children!*"

Born of such parents, baptized in real faith, and nurtured for Christ and the church, not for worldly aggrandizement or splendor, a very large number, as would be inferred from the sketches already drawn, became sincere followers of the Son of God, and shone brightly as "lights in the world." "Plain mechanics have I known," says a writer in 1681, "well catechised and humble Christians, excellent in practical piety; they kept their station; did not aspire to be preachers; but for gifts of prayer, few clergymen must come near them."*

Among the children and grand-children of "the fathers," it was not at all difficult to find those, who were as steadfast and efficient, as were Caleb and Joshua, in their co-operation with Moses and Aaron. Situated as they

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* Mather's Magn. Vol. I. 221.

were, in temporal privations and perils;—obliged to submit to every hardship and encounter innumerable obstacles to pecuniary advancement; an immense work to be done in the accomplishment of their purposes and measurable realization of their hopes and their faith,—their circumstances were highly suited to awaken the general mass to no ordinary degrees of physical, religious, and intellectual activity. The indomitable energy of the men of that early period, is vibrating yet in every pulsation of some millions of their resolute and still advancing posterity.

The Fathers held in common with other Puritans, "that all men are by nature destitute of true piety; that they naturally grow up in the practice of sin; and that no one becomes religious, except by a change in his habits of thought, feeling and conduct; which they ascribed to the special operation of the Holy Spirit as its supernatural cause. They believed that the truly pious are ordinarily conscious of this change in the action of their own minds when it takes place, and are able to describe it, though they may not then know that the change of which they are conscious is regeneration. In some cases, they admitted, the man is not aware of any change at the time of his conversion; yet he will be conscious of exercises afterward, such as no unregenerate man ever has. Some may be regenerated in infancy, which it is lawful for us to hope is the case with all who die before they are old enough to profit by the external means of grace. If any of them live to maturity, they will not be able to remember the time of their change, but they will be conscious of sensible love to God and holiness, penitence for sin and other pious exercises, and can give an account of them. They believed, therefore, that every converted person, who has arrived at the age of discretion, has a religious 'experience' which he can tell, and by hearing which, other pious persons may judge

of his piety. The evidence thus afforded, however, was to be compared with his conduct in all the relations of life, and if this also was 'such as becometh saints,' he was to be accounted a pious man."

Further; "a church they held to be 'a company of faithful persons, [so says the Platform of 1648,] i. e., persons who have saving faith, regenerate persons, agreeing and consenting to meet constantly together in one congregation for the public worship of God and their mutual edification; which real agreement and consent they do express by their constant practice in coming together for the worship of God, and by their religious subjection,' that is, by their subjecting themselves voluntarily from religious motives, 'to the ordinances of God therein.'" *

Moreover, it was most obvious, that the Congregational church government could never be administered properly, if all persons who pleased, could obtain admission to the churches. Men of no piety might soon outnumber all others, and the church would become but a name of distinction from the world.

Hence the mode of admission to the New England churches was entirely different from that which then obtained in almost every part of the Christian world. It was expected of all who joined them, to make a voluntary application, and furnish evidence of "fitness for membership."

Thus, in process of time, or about 1650 or 1655, arose a difficulty of a very serious nature. "Throughout Christendom in that age, neither Jews, Turks, pagans, infidels, nor excommunicated persons could enjoy the full privileges of citizenship. These privileges belonged only to persons who were in communion with the churches

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* Religion in America, Book VII. Chap. III. This chapter was furnished for the work, by Rev. Joseph Tracy.

established by law. The same rule was adopted in New England. None but members of churches could hold offices or vote at elections. Here, however, it operated as it did nowhere else. As the churches contained only those who were, in the judgment of charity, regenerate persons, a large portion of the people, among whom were many persons of intelligence, of good moral character, and orthodox in their creed, were excluded from valuable civil privileges."

It is probable, that the greatest dissatisfaction was expressed by those, who had newly arrived in the country, and who were quite different from the original colonists. But there were some of the children of the fathers, who gave no evidence of conversion, and were therefore not entitled to vote, or to hold civil offices. To meet the difficulty and the growing uneasiness, a part of the clergy, in a Synod at Cambridge, 1662, devised what has ever since been known, as the "half-way covenant;"— which, however effectual in quieting the discontent of such as felt aggrieved, was a very serious mistake, and productive of great evil.

Persons who had been baptized in infancy, were to be recognized as members of the church to which their parents belonged; excepting that they were not to be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper, until they should furnish the accredited evidence of personal regeneration. They were to profess their assent to the confession of faith, at some suitable time, after arriving at maturity of understanding. And if they were not scandalous in life, having owned the covenant of the church, they were entitled to bring their children to the ordinance of baptism.

This new system was strenuously resisted by a part of the ministers and of the laity. It never became universal; for the power of the synod, which recommended it, was only advisory. But a great change was effected;

and, in general, the collision between citizenship and church-membership was really at an end.

Not a few in New England were now ready to write "Ichabod" upon all the pillars of the churches. It has been thought, that such a change would have been impossible, during the lives of the most able and influential of the first generation of ministers. These were now nearly all gone, and the residue were just going.

It had become a common remark, it has been said, that the old and tried ministers, and other venerable men, were fast ceasing from the land; and a frequent lamentation anticipated a most disastrous withering of the hopes, which had been watered with their tears, at the feet of their sympathizing Redeemer and Lord. But the "vine out of Egypt" which had been "planted" among "the heathen," was not thus soon to be forsaken by Him, that "dwelleth between the cherubim." Already it had been "caused to take deep root." "The hills were covered with the shadow of it," and "the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars." The "hedges" were not "broken down," that "the boar out of the wood" should "waste it," and "the wild beast of the field devour it."

The predominant influence in all matters, both of State and Church, was decidedly that of the former generation. Troubles multiplied with the Indians, and much more blood was poured out, in wars offensive and defensive. Yet some thousands in the different tribes were brought under the power of the Gospel, and considerable villages were formed from among them, in which churches were built and schools supported. These were at times subjected to terrible slaughter and devastation, by the Pagan Indians; and suffered not a little also, in some instances, at the hands of the whites, who charged the Christian Indians, as being spies or accomplices of those who had taken up the tomahawk, for the extermination of the English.

A league for this end was formed, under the direction of the famous king Philip; and in the struggles which preceded and accompanied it, before his death, "every eleventh family was houseless, and every eleventh soldier had sunk to his grave."

It was just at this period, that the French were moving in Canada, to extend the power of France over all the immense region of the northwest; and to secure the dominion from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, through the great lakes and rivers to the Gulf of Mexico. But of their adventurous explorations, from Montreal to Michigan, and from Michigan to the Mississippi, the New England fathers, it is believed, knew little or nothing.*

So great was the impoverishment of the people, and their distress from Philip's war and divers calamities, that their condition awakened the compassionate sympathy of their relatives and others across the water. It is peculiarly interesting to us at this time to know, that a large donation was sent hither from *Ireland*, in January, 1677. Nathaniel Mather, pastor of a church in Dublin, and brother of Increase Mather, then pastor of the North Church in Boston, is supposed to have been the principal agent in procuring this donation. The amount distributed in Massachusetts was not less than £363; beside what was sent to the other Colonies;—which, with the necessary expenses, would make the whole collection, nearly if not quite *one thousand pounds.* Truly a generous donation in those days, and in proportion to numbers and means, fully equal to what has been considered a magnificent charity,—the relief sent to Ireland in the recent terrible famine!

Before 1680, there is no doubt, that there was a marked deterioration in the manners and morals of the population,

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* They had probably learned, however, some years before this time, that New England is not an "*island.*" See Appendix, E.

as compared with the communities of 1640. This may have been owing in a degree to the reaction of the strict enforcements of the previous generation; but far more, probably, to the irreligious example of immigrants from Europe, and more than all to the fashionable gaiety and licentiousness, which had such fearful ascendency in England, after the restoration of Charles II.; and which the "lovers of pleasure more than the lovers of God" in the Colonies, particularly in the larger towns, were not reluctant to imitate. Thus we find the clergy and pious laymen deploring the neglect of baptismal obligations; profanation of God's name; desecration of the Sabbath; want of piety in heads of families; intemperance and lewdness,—temptations to which they could not but see with disgust and abhorrence, in certain indelicate and wanton modes of female dress, which, I may observe, would not be tolerated a day, in the present generation. The godly men also mourned over the dishonesty in traffic and unfaithfulness to promises, and the ambitious worldliness of some individuals, who had removed to a distance from churches, for the sake of more valuable farms or merchandize; forgetting, it was said, that "when Lot left Canaan and the church for better accommodations in Sodom, *God fired him out of all.*"

In May, 1679, a Synod of the churches in the Massachusetts Colony was convened by order of Court, to consider and answer these questions:—1st. What are the reasons that have provoked the Lord to bring his judgments upon New England? 2d. What is to be done that so these evils may be removed?

The consideration of the first question drew forth such intimations of alarming degeneracy, as those just described; while the second question was met, as might have been expected, without any apparent fear of man, whether high or low. The synod enjoin upon all, "who were above others" to "become every way exemplary;"

summoned the people to declare "their adherence to the faith and discipline of their fathers;" insisted upon the importance of guarding against receiving unworthy persons to church communion; urged the necessity of "a full supply of church officers, pastors, teachers and ruling elders," and a competent support of the same; recommended an explicit renewal of covenant in the churches, which implied a season of fasting and humiliation; and suggested other reformatory measures, in the use of which the people might have reason to expect a removal of their calamities.

Very good effects followed the meeting of that synod. The churches generally renewed their covenant. And as it would seem, in order that as far as possible the members might be brought to the same faith and practice, as "the fathers" professed and sanctioned, the original Confession and Covenant of the First Church in Salem, as formed August 6, 1629, were published for general circulation and adoption.

Much abatement must be made from the earnest language, which was employed by some of the good men of that period, in portraying the character of the times. Many circumstances conspired to spread a gloom over every aspect of affairs, both civil and religious. The pious old ministers especially, who remembered the best things of the earlier days, and forgot the worst, would not unnaturally make assertions or accusations, which (like some confessions in prayer) the historian and the reader must not interpret too literally.

The truth was, probably, that with an indisputable falling away in some marked respects, there was yet a large majority of families, in which the memory and example of "the fathers" were cherished with a sincere and sacred veneration. And great as was the quantity of tares which the arch-enemy of all righteousness had sowed among the wheat, by himself or his servants, the wheat was still able

to grow for a harvest of "thirty" and "sixty," if not "an hundred fold."

Whenever, in our own day, "they that fear the Lord, speak often one to another" in the retired private meetings of prayer and conference,—it is an infallible proof, that the Holy Spirit has not been taken away from the surrounding community, and an auspicious token of a blessing to come. From the beginning of the colonial settlements, it had been common to sustain such meetings. At some seasons, these were multiplied or more frequently attended. Not far from 1680, or in the very time when the "degeneracy" from the practices of "the fathers" was so much lamented,—we find the statement of a writer, that "the country still is full of those little meetings." There are those, to whom this single item of history, is like opening a window upon a verdant landscape, where the rains have fallen, and the sun is shining, and the joy of harvest will erelong awaken the song of the reaper. Upon the whole, it may unhesitatingly be affirmed, that, in no part of the Christian world, was there so great encouragement for godly parents to hope for spiritual blessings upon their "children's children."

In the "Magnalia," we have an "ecclesiastical map of the country" for 1696. It affords conclusive witness of great religious advancement. And with good reason did an aged saint of that period remark upon his death-bed,—"Well, I am going to heaven, and I will there tell the faithful, who are long since gone from New England thither, that though they, who gathered our churches are all dead and gone,—the churches are still alive, with as numerous flocks of Christians, as were ever among them."

At this time also, notwithstanding all the obstacles and difficulties, so great had been the success of laborers among the Indians of different tribes, or different portions of the same tribe,—that, in 1696, there were not less than

thirty Indian churches in Massachusetts alone; and in 1698, there were three thousand reputed converts.

But it is painful to be obliged to say,—that there are those, who know little else of the religious history of New England, in the 17th century,—that is, during the eighty years after the Plymouth settlement,—excepting that Roger Williams was banished to Rhode Island; that some, who were called Baptists and Quakers, — very different people from those now so called, — were made to suffer severe penalties of law; and that, in Salem, innocent people were put to death, under accusation of witchcraft.

I would not assume the responsibility of justifying all that was done by "the fathers," in repelling the encroachments of conflicting religious opinions, and in suppressing the movements of disorganizers and fanatics; any more than I should be ready to vindicate the propriety of such executions as those in Salem, in 1692. But I am prepared to say, that the man who cannot find so much of an *apology* for the transactions in question, that he can most freely forgive the mistakes of the few, who were most concerned in them, and most heartily join in a tribute of grateful respect and reverence for those, who are properly styled "the Fathers of New England,"—can hardly be a man, who is entitled to a very high consideration, for his knowledge of the facts, his discrimination of truth, or his candor of judgment. Make the very most that can be made, of alleged intolerance, persecution, and bigotry, it can still be demonstrated, that our New England progenitors were entirely and most honorably in advance of all the rest of Christendom, in their conception of the rights of conscience, and their exemplification of Christian liberty. If they acted inconsistently with their principles, it was from the very necessity of their position. "It was not," as has been justly said, "so much a question of toleration as of the maintenance or defeat of the very de-

sign of their emigration ; they were well assured, that, if the malcontents could succeed in their designs, they themselves would not much longer be allowed their freedom in the worship of God." * It was not for *opinions*, but for corrupt, shameless, disorganizing, and demoralizing *words and deeds*,—that those were caused to suffer, who never deserved the least credit or sympathy, as if Christian martyrs. He that courts martyrdom, is no martyr. Let things be done now in Salem, on the Sabbath, or on other days, like those for which some are falsely said to have been persecuted ;—and not an hour would pass, before the offenders would be in custody.

And it really would seem a little too much for ordinary forbearance, that as honest and pure men as ever breathed, should be opposed and reproached in their own generation, as going a whole age or more, too fast and too far, and then, in generations afterwards, be calumniated and stigmatized, for not going, ages upon ages, farther than they did ;—calumniated and stigmatized by men too, who, if there never had been in the world such characters, as they thus outrageously abuse, would themselves have now been in benighted barbarism or polluted heathenism! Let who will, point the finger of derision at the pious founders of these associated States of the American Republic,—the history of man will be searched in vain for a people, that adopted wiser measures, or secured for their posterity more exalted privileges and means of knowledge and virtue, freedom and happiness! Toleration of religious opinions is one of the last lessons of human advancement. And it is much easier to denounce others, for illiberality and intolerance, than to be examples of true Christian charity. Those who complain the most of their fellow-men, for uncharitableness, are not seldom the greatest offenders, by being so " fierce for moderation."

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* See Appendix, F.

Passing out of the 17th into the 18th century, we soon notice another ecclesiastical innovation, which was the natural sequence of the half-way covenant of 1662. In 1707, the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, of Northampton, a highly influential divine, published a sermon, in which he maintained, that "unregenerate persons ought to partake of the Lord's Supper." He had avowed the belief, three years before, that the Lord's Supper should be considered a means of regeneration. It has been sometimes said, that he himself had had a religious experience, which would make such a belief very plausible, if not, in his own view, unquestionable.

One of his arguments, and plainly a very specious one, was, that "it is impossible to distinguish the regenerate from the unregenerate, so as to admit the former and exclude the latter." So far as his opinions received countenance, the practical effect was, to remove entirely that barrier to indiscriminate communion, which the old half-way covenant had not presumed to touch. And as it has been shrewdly remarked, "the church was now obliged to convict the applicant of a scandalous life, or of heresy, or admit him to full communion; and one reason for it was the supposed impossibility of judging whether he was regenerated or not!"

Mr. Stoddard was personally a decided Calvinist; but his system inevitably favored Arminianism, by "teaching that the impenitent have something to do *before repentance*, as a means of obtaining saving grace." The unregenerate communicant would of course consider himself as in the way appointed for his salvation. And assuming that it was impossible to distinguish the really converted from the unconverted, by any definite experience which could be described, there would naturally be no very great disquietude of conscience.

Mr. Stoddard's new doctrine was ably resisted. Still the influence was disastrous; as appeared from the gradual

adoption of it by churches, which had recognized the system of the half-way covenant. It paralyzed effort for immediate conversion. No awakenings were known in places, which had previously been highly favored; and many partook of the sacramental elements, who "had a name to live, but were dead." And that the disaster was not more extensive and deplorable, is only to be explained by the steadfast adherence of so large a portion of the ministers and church members to "the old paths," and "the good way" in which "the fathers found rest for their souls." There were those in large numbers, who protested against the assertion and assumption, that regenerate persons cannot be distinguished from the unregenerate, with any such certainty or probability, as would make a profession of Christian experience a suitable and just requirement for admission to the full privileges of church-membership.

As God, in the wonderful working of his providence would have it, an instrument of most formidable opposition to the doctrine and system of Stoddard, was raised up in his own grand-son, Jonathan Edwards; who, as the greatest theologian and metaphysician of this continent, commenced his career in the very place, where his much respected grand-parent had proclaimed his unfortunate errors. As early as 1735, a course of sermons on justification by faith, with others on kindred topics, such as the necessity of the Spirit's influences, were blessed of God with a marvellous accompanying of convictions and conversions. A similar awakening or revival was experienced in other towns of Massachusetts and Connecticut. "The work in Northampton was confined to no class or age." "Ten persons above ninety, more than fifty above forty years of age; nearly thirty between ten and fourteen, and one, of only four, became, in the view of Mr. Edwards, subjects of renewing grace. More than three hundred were added to the church."

A tremendous shock was now given to the doctrine, that the exercises of regenerate persons were not distinguishable from those of unregenerate. Several hundreds of new converts, in different towns, had such distinctive religious exercises, that they had not the least hesitation in speaking of them, as matters of fact in their consciousness, as much as any facts whatsoever. They could give a rational and most affecting account of their conviction of sin, their struggle before submission to God, their acceptance of Christ as the Saviour of the lost, and their subsequent trust or hope, peace or joy, as believers in Jesus. Among these were many persons of such acknowledged powers of intellect, and of such indisputable eminence, that no man could class them among the ignorant and the obscure.

Ministers were now called to very solemn searchings of heart, in regard to their own prospects of acceptance at the judgment-seat of Christ. A new encouragement was felt, in preaching the law and the gospel, from the expectation that hearers would be converted, and would be able to exhibit credible evidence of having passed from death unto life. Church members, also, could not all escape the question, so pungently asked by some in our own days, 'What reason have I to think myself a Christian?'

Intelligence of the revival in this country arrested the attention of a multitude in England and Scotland. Edwards wrote a narrative, under the title of "Surprising Conversions,"—which was published in London, "with an Introduction by Drs. Watts and Guise." It was soon reprinted in Boston, and was extensively read, and exerted a powerful influence in both hemispheres.

In 1740, revivals commenced anew at Northampton, Boston, and many other places, very nearly at the same time, and spread within a year and a half throughout all the English colonies. For some time, there was most evidently a silent, powerful, and sublime work of the Spirit

of God. Whitefield came, and preached like Peter on the day of Pentecost. Afterwards, the intemperate zeal of some preachers, like Davenport, with excesses of various kinds, gave occasion to open and violent contention in some towns, and, perhaps, in none more unhappily than in Boston.

Just in the hour of need, the great and good Edwards applied his gigantic powers, in a searching and refining operation, that all who would, might see the difference between the precious and the vile. His work, entitled "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England, and the way in which it ought to be acknowledged and promoted,"—begins and ends, as if his soul had been bathing for years in the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb."

Of the most respectable ministers in New England, New York, and New Jersey, *one hundred and sixty* united in a public attestation to the genuineness and purity of the Revival, in most places; while they joined with Mr. Edwards, in censuring and deploring those improprieties and excesses, which had given the enemies of God much occasion to blaspheme. Among these, I am grateful to know, was my honored father's godly grand-parent,—the Rev. Francis Worcester, who was at the time the pastor of the Second Church, in your neighboring town of Sandwich. An intimate acquaintance, and sometimes a fellow-traveller with Whitefield, he afterwards was a very successful evangelist and home missionary, in the more destitute parts of New England.

Those excellent men could not counteract, as they desired, the untoward effect of the spirit of controversy, which had been inflamed, and which has always proved fatal to the progress of a revival. As the Holy Spirit operates through the truth, as in Jesus, and the truth must be kept distinctly before the mind, that the legiti-

mate effect may be produced,—it is obvious, that whatever serves to divert the attention of the anxious inquirer from the truth itself in its manifestation to the conscience, will inevitably be injurious, if not fatal, to the progress of the work of grace. It is thus, that discussions on the subject of baptism have sometimes put an immediate end to a revival.

Hence, from the controversy which was occasioned, the GREAT AWAKENING appeared, in 1743, to have come to its close. It had wrought, however, a "great salvation:" for "it was the Lord's doing." And well might it be "MARVELLOUS" in the eyes of his people, notwithstanding all which they had seen or heard of human imperfections and extravagances. "Those who had the best means of judging," says a learned and careful writer, "estimated the number of true converts, as proved by their subsequent lives, at 30,000, in New England alone, at a time when the whole population was but 300,000; besides many thousands more among the Presbyterians of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the more southern settlements."

It was, then, as you may see, a result, which you will the more vividly apprehend, if you just consider, that it would be like adding to the churches in Massachusetts, within the next three years,—80,000 persons, young and old,—and of such as would continue to sustain a Christian character; and to the churches throughout the Union, not less than EIGHTEEN HUNDRED THOUSAND!!

The more I reflect upon the subject, the more am I persuaded, that no inconsiderable part of that which makes the true glory of New England, and which to human eye affords the brightest promise of the world's hastening and approaching salvation, would never have had an existence, but for those marvellous years of the right hand of the Most High.

I do not wonder that Edwards was led to believe, that

the millennium was to begin in New England. Most cordially did he respond to the proposal by the churches of Scotland, in 1746, for a Concert of Prayer for the Conversion of the World. And after being dismissed from Northampton, it was in the true spirit of missions, that he took charge of a church and school of Indians, at Stockbridge.

There were of old mighty men and men of renown. But who among "the fathers" was equal to him? And where now is his equal? His work on "Original Sin," his unanswerable Treatise on the "Will," his "History of Redemption," his analysis of the "Affections," are theological classics, of priceless value, and their influence is incalculable. David Brainerd, the most illustrious missionary in those times of extraordinary reviving, has never had his superior upon the earth, in all the essential qualities of an ambassador for God in Christ's stead. The wonders of divine grace were nowhere more wonderful, in all the wide extent of the memorable visitation of God's covenant love, than among the Indian tribes to whom he ministered in New Jersey. To pray for the conversion of the whole world, in the concert of prayer recommended the year previous by the churches of Scotland, was, in 1747, the farewell injunction of that lamented man of God, when he fell asleep in Jesus. And who can tell how many, less known by their memoirs, or by any other witness, than Henry Martyn and Robert Murray McCheyne, have been awakened or stimulated to a holier devotedness, by the refulgent and inextinguishable lustre of David Brainerd's example in imitation of Christ!

Much of missionary spirit was enkindled in the Revival of 1740. Hence the Indian school of Rev. Eleazer Wheelock, at Lebanon, Conn.; designed to educate preachers to the Indians. Hence other efforts which

cannot be specified. And if the French war and the Revolutionary war had not so soon followed, and so occupied all classes, very much more would undoubtedly have been attempted and accomplished. Nothing can be plainer, to my own view, than that the churches and people of New England grew and prospered, according as they enjoyed revivals of religion ; and that in proportion as the *spirituality* of the churches was advanced or retarded, the active interest in missionary toils and sacrifices was evinced or suspended.

In 1745, Whitefield preached at Boston before the New England army,—I had almost called them "a sacramental host,"—which was just embarking for Louisburg, under command of Sir William Pepperell. The expedition was undertaken as in "a war of the Lord," against the "man of sin," and the power of mystical "Babylon." For wherever France prevailed, there Romanism and Jesuitism followed,—the Romanism and Jesuitism of the bloody night of Saint Bartholomew's. Unnumbered prayers, therefore, went up to the "Lord of Sabaoth." The triumph was as when Jerusalem had deliverance from Rabshakeh, and Sennacherib :—or as when the Maccabees returned to the holy city, after the overthrow of the legions of the ferocious Antiochus of Syria, who had sworn to exterminate the worshippers of Jehovah from every foot of soil in the land of promise.

From the capture of Louisburg to the fall of Quebec, —thence to the Peace of 1783,—and thence to 1795, when the volcano of the first French Revolution sent its lurid glare and desolating lava over the civilized world,— the Christian people of New England and of all the Colonies, for more than half of the whole period, had no rest from the alarms of war. Their patriotism was one with their piety. Tens of thousands went forth to battle, or suffered privations and hardships, with as pure a prin-

ciple of duty, and as firm a reliance upon the mighty God of Jacob, as ever emboldened and sustained those Hebrew worthies, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens!"

There were earthly and ungodly elements that mingled in the strife. But if it had not been for the *religious* element; if it had not been for the baptism, into which the "children's children" had been baptized,—never, never, could the materials have been furnished for such volumes of history,—never have been known such unexampled occasion for the gratitude of posterity and the world, to them and to their fathers, and to their own and their fathers' God.

It would not be difficult to draw a portraiture, with some dark lines and shadows. Influences of evil, both in opinion and practice, were powerfully at work, in secret and in open day. Perhaps none were more decisive upon a part of the clergy, than the imported publications of Whitby, Taylor and Emlyn. The Socinian "Inquiries" of the latter were reprinted in Boston, without any responsible editor;—but not without a strong surmise of the real patron, in an eloquent minister of the city. But with all that was sadly incompatible with the "free course" of the gospel; with all that was positively demoralizing;—the foundations of the "fathers" remained, as unmoved as the everlasting hills.

Although in the metropolis and some of the interior towns, there was more of Arminius than of Calvin, both in the study and in the pulpit, if not also as much of Arius as of Arminius, or as much of Socinus and Taylor as of Edwards and Athanasius; yet a vast majority of the New England churches would not endure any other than

"sound doctrine" as they understood it, and would not support any other than liberally educated and strictly evangelical pastors. The theological system of the elder Edwards had most able advocates. His own son, a greater reasoner with somewhat less of the native power of reason than the father, vindicated New England divinity with amazing force of moral demonstration. There were others, like Bellamy, Smalley, Backus, West, Hopkins, Emmons, who were as the cedars of Lebanon to the trees of the field.

During the period from 1745 to 1795, the state of religion, according to the standard of the fathers, was, perhaps, nowhere more unpromising, than in the easterly part of Massachusetts, and within the limits of a great portion of the oldest churches. It may be accounted for, by the more immediate and frequent intercourse with foreigners, who had but little favor for experimental godliness; by the encouragement which a few distinguished names afforded to the open opposers of the "New Lights," as some chose to designate the friends of the "Great Awakening;" and by an ambiguous and indefinite mode of preaching, which naturally resulted from a real, but generally covert, hostility to the Trinitarian and Calvinistic forms of belief. There was no revival of any note, in any of the Congregational churches of the city of Boston, from the period of the revival of 1740, almost to our own day. With very inconsiderable exceptions, the same remark may be made of Salem, and other towns on the seacoast.

It was far otherwise in many places. There was not by any means such an apparent suspension of divine influence in reviving and enlarging the churches of New England, as has sometimes been represented. In the fifty years previous to the remarkable season of "refreshing," at the close of the last century, there were numerous insulated revivals,—as has been abundantly attested by re-

cent investigations; and also some that were contiguous or nearly associated, throughout all that period. There were no magazines or religious newspapers to report them; and hence mainly the mistake of some, who have supposed that there were few or none to report. Besides, many of the revivals were in towns which had but little communication with the capital.

When, however, the eyes of the Christian world were turned with consternation to the atheistical revolution in France, the pious people of this country, and nowhere more than in New England, gave themselves to prayer. There was also a new searching of the Scriptures, that, if possible, it might be known what God was about to reveal in his providence. From a concurrence or combination of causes, which cannot now be particularly described, the delightful tokens of a brighter day cheered the anxious and quivering hearts of the faithful in Christ Jesus. Revivals began to increase in number and in power. And soon it seemed as if the years of the former generation were again to pass over the land.

From 1797 and onward, so many revivals were enjoyed in the churches, that an eminent minister in Connecticut, as he stood at his door, could count upwards of seventy contiguous congregations, which all had participated in the outpouring from the gracious presence of the Lord. In different parts of New England, there were hundreds of ministers, whose hearts were gladdened by this great "refreshing." Some of them had personal recollections of the awakening of 1740, with which they gratefully compared the present auspicious visitation. Many had previously had, in some instances, a rich experience from Him, who "giveth the increase." Some, who were in the vigor of manhood, had seen the promise of the Spirit, like "the small rain upon the tender herb," but never before as a "mighty rushing wind." Others knew of revivals chiefly from records, which were fast growing old, and

going to decay. But when it is remembered, that there were so many churches ready for the wondrous ministration of the Spirit, and so many pastors qualified to act as co-workers with "the Lord of the harvest," he who writes the history of the Puritan Pilgrims of New England and their "children's children," may have ample evidence if he will but find it, that, in the fifty or more years previous to the close of the eighteenth century, by far the larger part of churches and ministers were of one mind and spirit with the "fathers," in their doctrinal and practical religion.

In the midst of those revivals near the close of the eighteenth century, the missionary spirit, as a legitimate consequence, received a new impulse. Evangelical Christians, across the Atlantic, had sent missionaries to India, Africa, and the islands of the South Pacific. Intelligence of their operations was hailed in New England with a lively gratitude. It is not strange that none went forth from our churches, to other continents or to the distant islands that were waiting for God's law. There was a loud call for more service at home, than could be rendered. The emigration to the wilderness of Maine, to Middle and Western New York, to Ohio, and to other parts of the Mississippi Valley, urged a powerful claim upon the benevolent sympathies of those who remained at home, fast by the old foundations. With many the thought was too painful for endurance, that the new settlements should be formed without the institutions of the gospel, and a competent supply of the means of grace.

Hence arose such societies, as the Connecticut Missionary Society, and the Massachusetts Missionary Society. This latter society was not at the beginning, nor for twenty years afterwards, what it now is, a *domestic* or *home* missionary society, but was organized upon the broad basis of a *foreign* missionary association. "*The object of this society*," says the constitution, adopted May,

1799, "*is to diffuse the knowledge of the gospel among the heathens, as well as other people in the remote parts of our country, where Christ is seldom or never preached.*"

"*Where Christ is seldom or never preached?*" inquired the Rev. Joshua Spaulding, then pastor of the Tabernacle Church: "if that is your object, you should send missionaries to *Boston!*" For two or three years, he had been urging his ministerial and lay brethren to form a society for missions at their very doors, as within the limits of Marblehead, at Boston, and in other places, where, as he believed, "CHRIST was seldom or never preached," as hundreds needed to hear!

It is remarkable, that his idea of *city missions* has now been adopted, with great interest and effect. But the Massachusetts Missionary Society, which owed its origin as much or more to him, than to any other single individual, could never have been formed, but with the distinct contemplation of a much more extended circumference for a field of labor.

The first address of the society breathes the genuine spirit of the charge from Mount Olivet. Recognizing "the glorious gospel of Christ as the adequate and only medium of recovering lost sinners to God and happiness," and responding to "the grand commission which Christ gave to his primitive disciples," the address "entreats" all "Christian brethren, in view of their immense indebtedness to redeeming grace, their solemn covenant vows, their accountability and their hopes, to cast the eye of attentive observation upon the condition of thousands and millions of our guilty race, in other countries and in our own, particularly among the heathen tribes, and on the frontiers of the United States, forming a vast line of new settlements, peculiarly embarrassed with respect to their religious interests and local circumstances; and ask whether, when their danger is so great, when their spiritual wants are so urgent, when there is so much zeal on

the part of wickedness, infidelity and atheism, counteracting the gospel—there be not reason to put forth every exertion for the spread of that precious gospel, which is the grand charter of our eternal inheritance."

The society was thus brought into the closest affinity and fellowship with others in Great Britain, like the Society for the Propagation of Christian knowledge in Scotland,—under the auspices of which the missionaries Sergeant and Kirkland were laboring among the Indian tribes in Western Massachusetts and New York; and part of which were then as far from Boston, as are now the tribes west of the Mississippi. If the means could have been procured, establishments precisely similar to those now sustained by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, might have been organized and cherished, in the strictest accordance with the purpose of the Massachusetts Missionary Society. And the simple fact is, that it was not until long after the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was formed, that this society and others, which are now purely *home* societies, were understood to be such, in the present acceptation of the term. By a missionary society, was meant an association to spread the gospel through all the world, by preaching it in any accessible region or place, where "CHRIST is seldom or never preached." And the Massachusetts Missionary Society, was a society of *Massachusetts missionary men;* not a missionary society *for* Massachusetts!

In June, 1803, appeared the first number of the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine,—in which there is the same foreign missionary spirit and general character, as you now see in the Missionary Herald. But what a change in forty-five years! If any one would see an amazing contrast, and the thrilling demonstration of an immense progress in the enterprise of the world's evangelization, let him read some of the last numbers of the

Herald of the American Board, and some of the first of the Magazine of the Massachusetts Missionary Society.

And let him compare also the Massachusetts Missionary Society, in 1800, with its two or three missionaries, a part of the year, with the present American Home Missionary Society, with its more than one thousand missionaries from the Aroostook to Oregon and California!

So rapidly did the missionary spirit advance, after intelligence of foreign and domestic operations was brought before the churches, that in 1804, the constitution of the society was modified, so that the article defining the object was made to read ;—"The object of the society is, to diffuse the gospel among the people of the newly settled and remote parts of our country, among the Indians of the country, and *through more distant regions of the earth*, as circumstances shall invite, and the ability of the society shall admit." And if the men could have been had, and the money could have been obtained, missionaries could have been sent by the Massachusetts Missionary Society to Bombay, Ceylon, or the Sandwich Islands, just as *constitutionally* as they were afterwards sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

This great organization came into form and life, in the year 1810. It was necessary to unite the friends of missions in all the land, and under the sign and seal of an *American*, rather than a *State* designation, to solicit contributions from all the churches of the Union, with express reference to missions in Asia, and among the far-distant Gentiles of other parts of the known world. Other Societies followed, one after another, as the eyes of God's people were opened and enlightened.

The first missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, were from the Theological Seminary at Andover,—an institution which owed its

origin, chiefly, to the alarm which was felt, after the successor of Dr. Tappan was appointed at Harvard. The oldest and most venerable college of the land,—which was so early and so piously dedicated to "Christ and the Church,"—had received a Professor of Theology, who taught a very different mode of doctrine from that of the "fathers." Yet it has been said by those who ought to be acknowledged as indisputable authority, that if at that time he had avowed himself to be what he undoubtedly was, and what afterwards he freely admitted, he could not have been chosen to be the incumbent of a chair, which, by the express provision of the pious Hollis, was never to be filled, but by a man "*of sound or orthodox principles*"! What was meant by such principles, there is no more reason to doubt, than there is to deny that there ever was any such man as Hollis. The purpose of his donation should be sacredly regarded; or the trust should be relinquished.

Far be it from me to speak invidiously or any wise reproachfully. It is but sober, candid history that I would write of the past. But the truth, once denied with no ordinary vehemence if not virulence, is now fully conceded, viz :—that in all but one of the Congregational churches in Boston, and in perhaps fifty others elsewhere, there was a *concealment* of the real sentiments of the pastors. It was not until 1815, and after a most exciting controversy, that *that* "*concealment*," which had been so vigilantly and sagaciously maintained, for nearly or quite a whole generation, was no longer possible. And it certainly is a consideration, of some historical interest, if not theological importance, that the same mode of religious doctrine which was thus introduced and fostered in New England, had a similar introduction and development in Old England, in Scotland, in Holland, in Switzerland, and in Germany.

More than thirty years have now passed, since what

those most interested prefer to call "Liberal Christianity" has been openly and eloquently defended in this country. Talents, wealth, literature, refinement, with other powerful auxiliaries, have not been wanting. And now what is the prospect, that in any of its modes or forms, it will ever supplant the faith of the "fathers" among the "children's children"? And if this will not supplant that faith, what form of doctrine will?

According to returns and estimates,* a few years since, there were in the United States, nearly fifty thousand churches, Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, and Baptist. But according to the best authorities, the whole number of Unitarian churches or congregations,† throughout the country, at the present time, is about two hundred and forty! Three-fifths of these are in Massachusetts alone; and quite a proportion of them are very small. Not one half of the number were gathered and organized, as Unitarian. *Ninety* of them exist within the limits of the old evangelical organizations.

Of more than seven hundred Congregational churches in Massachusetts, at the present time, nearly five hundred and fifty are *orthodox*. And of these, full two hundred and twenty-five have been *gathered* within the last twenty-five years! The number of other Congregational churches has, in the same period, remained nearly *stationary!* And the proportion of communicants in the orthodox Congregational churches, is very much greater; being, at a moderate calculation, as ten to one!

In general, also, the efficiency of the evangelical Congregational churches has been vastly augmented. It is as yet susceptible of a ten fold, if not a hundred fold augmentation. Upon all the great points of doctrinal dispute, there is a feeling that the work of public controversy is finished. We have a far more congenial work to do,—

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* Baird's Religion in America. † Unitarian Almanac, &c.

in carrying forward the numerous enterprises of true evangelical charity.

There is no antidote to error, like the truth as in Jesus, when it comes upon the conscience, in demonstration of the Spirit. Hence there is no available power, like a genuine revival, to give the advantage and the victory to the friends of the Saviour. Most abundant and most striking has been the witness of this, in the progress which evangelical religion has made in our Commonwealth, within twenty-five years.

Look at Boston, and see what it is, as compared with what it was forty and thirty years since. Look over all New England, and see what mode of religious sentiment has the sway over the masses. Make the most that you can out of all the various sects and names, which are antagonistical to the faith, or at variance with the ecclesiastical order of *the founders* of New England. You will find a most decided preponderance of the intellectual and the moral strength of their descendants, where they would wish, above all things, that it should be ;—upholding and advancing the institutions of "the glorious gospel," and "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

An hour more would scarcely suffice, that I should only name our largest associations of Christian philanthropy,—which every day are adding new gems or a brighter effulgence to the "crown" of the rejoicing of "the fathers," at the coming of the Lord.

And, my brethren, as we now look back upon the past, and around upon the present, how can we despair of the Religion of the "fathers?" Can we with such seminaries of learning and theology,—more than forty of the latter existing, where we had but one, forty years ago; with such increasing advantages of popular education; with such an immense distribution of the Bible and of books illustrative of the Bible; with so many thousand

evangelical churches, and so many hundred thousand children, taught the "words" which are "spirit and life,"—every Sabbath day? What Religion, what Doctrine is it, which more than twenty-five thousand ministers are preaching in the thirty States of this Union? Radically and essentially the Religion of faith in the atoning blood of an All-sufficient, because Almighty Redeemer; and the Doctrine, that "*God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

I have no time to enlarge. My limits are more than occupied already. But from the review now presented of our New England history, you will not, I trust, think of me, as uttering more than the words of truth and soberness, when I proclaim the sentiment, that of all people in the world, we are under the highest obligations to support munificently, and communicate to the ends of the earth, the knowledge and the institutions of the "everlasting gospel."

The period during which our country has so amazingly developed our resources of every description, most needful and important, for the sustenance, protection, and exaltation of a more intelligent, more benevolent, more powerful, because more *Christian* people, than has ever existed,—has been the period since the great battle of Waterloo. Peace has blessed our land, and so far other nations also, that a vastly greater proportion of well-educated or of aspiring mind, than ever before, since the world began, has been employed in devising ways and means, by which labor shall have the largest ratio of product with the least amount of physical or mental exhaustion; and by which all the powers of nature shall be constrained to pay their richest and noblest tribute to him, who was "made" but "a little lower than the angels"; and thus the world receive the fullest demon-

stration, that he who fell with "the first man," rises by "the second" — "the Lord from heaven,"—higher and higher in the original dignity and grandeur of his immortal nature,—recovering and re-assuming one measure after another of his lost dominion over the whole inferior creation.

When before were such opportunities, facilities, and incitements to mental and moral activity, afforded to so large a number, as now constitute the substantial and reliable portions of our community? Since Europe has been brought within less than twelve days from our greatest cities; and the magnetic telegraph outstrips the sun, by thousands of miles per hour,—what next may we not expect to see, among the merely "*incidental benefits*," as they were termed by Robert Hall,—"which Christianity scatters along her way in her sublime march to immortality?" What a spectacle are we now as a nation? And what is yet to be?

When Calvin was dying, he reached his emaciated hand towards an open Bible;—"*there* is the safety of the Church and the State!" So felt the "fathers" of New England, to their inmost soul. In the Bible—Old Testament and New—one and inseparable,—they found the Rock of Ages. They lived and they died, triumphantly "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Let *us*, therefore, as their children's children, cherish like precious faith; and with them give God the glory of all that we have, and all that we hope. Let us send the gospel to the farthest bounds of the globe. It is the greatest gift, which man can impart to his brother man.

It is God's appointed method for the intellectual, moral, civil, and political regeneration of all the various nations and tribes of the earth; as well as for the personal salvation of each individual, whatever his honor or dishonor, his wealth or poverty, his virtue or his corruption, his enjoyment or his wretchedness.

In fulfilling the grand commission of our ascending Saviour and Lord, we would begin at our own Jerusalem. We would remember those who are like sheep in the wilderness, without a shepherd; and as we the more remember *them*, would still the less forget the famishing and the perishing upon the dark mountains of far-distant idolatries and cruel sorrows. We would publish the adorable name of Jesus to every creature. And that the children who will take our places may have our exalted and priceless privileges unimpaired; that those thousands, those millions who are following "the star of empire" westward to the Pacific shores, may never lose sight of the "Bright and Morning Star"; that the mighty people that now are, and all that may arise from them, or be added to them, may be mightier far in the eyes of all the world, and in the sight of the Supreme Lawgiver and the Judge of all, be "a wise and understanding people";—may we all most gratefully honor the memory of our fathers, and with the same love of Christ and of souls, the same faith and hope, may we enter into their labors. And the greater the number, the unanimity, the energy, and the unfaltering resolution and perseverance of those who thus enter into their labors,—the greater is the moral certainty, that, for all ages to come, the Scripture will here have a most magnificent and sublime witness,—that "CHILDREN'S CHILDREN ARE THE CROWN OF OLD MEN, AND THE GLORY OF CHILDREN ARE THEIR FATHERS"!

APPENDIX.

A. [p. 9.]

The Pilgrims, before they landed, made a civil compact, as follows:

"In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are vnder-written, the loyall Subiects of our dread soveraigne Lord King IAMES, by the grace of God of Great *Britaine, France,* and *Ireland* King, Defender of the Faith, &c.

"Having vnder-taken for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian Faith, and honour of our King and Countrey, a Voyage to plant the first Colony in the Northerne parts of VIRGINIA, doe by these presents solemnly & mutually in the presence of *God* and one of another, covenant, and combine our selues together into a civill body politike, for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame such iust and equall Lawes, Ordinances, acts, constitutions, offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the generall good of the Colony; vnto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witnesse whereof we haue here-vnder subscribed our names. *Cape Cod,* 11th of *November,* in the yeare of the raigne of our sovraigne Lord King IAMES, of *England, France,* and *Ireland,* 18. and of *Scotland* 54. *Anno Domino* 1620."

"The elder President Adams," says Dr. Pierce in his recent Election Sermon, "was in the habit of referring to this compact, as the germ of our republican institutions."

It does not appear, that the Pilgrims had any very definite idea of the manner in which they should attempt to manage civil affairs, until they were on the very point of disembarking.

"This day before we came to harbour, obseruing some not well affected to vnitie and concord, but gaue some appearance of faction, it was thought good there should be an association and agreement, that we should combine together in one body, and to submit to such government and governours, as we should by common consent agree to make and choose, and set our hands to this that followes word for word."

But in their ecclesiastical action, as church-members upon the basis of equality and fraternity, and in their "Town-Meetings," we cannot fail to recognize what Mr. Bancroft has called "the seminal principles of republican freedom and national independence." If, however, they had found the river Hudson, for which they had searched, they would have been so near the limits of the Virginia Company, that they might not have formed the Compact, "which," as Dr. Cheever justly remarks in his recent work,—"whatever may have been their original intention or foresight, constituted them a self-governing republic, although named 'loyal subjects of our dread sovereign lord, King James.'"

Yet it is to be remembered, that the real purpose of the founders of our civil and political institutions was *religious,* in the strictest sense of the term. This is indicated by the first words of the above Compact. Elsewhere the witness is most explicit. The reasons for leaving Holland are "recited," says Morton's Memorial, "as received from themselves."

"First, Because themselves were of a different Language from the *Dutch,* where they Lived, and were settled in their way, insomuch that in ten years time, whilst their Church sojourned amongst them, they could not bring them to reform the neglect of Observation of the Lord's Day as a Sabbath, or any other thing amiss amongst them.

"Secondly, Because their Countrymen, who came over to joyn with them, by reason of the hardness of the Country, soon spent their Estates, and were then forced either to return back to *England*, or to live very meanly.

"Thirdly, That many of their Children, through the extream necessity that was upon them, altho' of the best dispositions, and graciously inclined, and willing to bear part of their Parents burthens, were oftentimes so oppressed with their heavy labours, that although their Spirits were free and willing, yet their Bodies bowed under the weight of the same, and became decrepid in their early youth, and the vigour of Nature consumed in the very bud. And that which was very lamentable, and of all sorrows most heavy to be born, was, that many by these occasions, and the great licentiousness of Youth in that Country, and the manifold temptations of the place, were drawn away by evil examples into extravagant and dangerous courses, getting the reins on their necks, and departing from their Parents: Some became Souldiers, others took upon them far Voyages by Sea, and othersome worse courses tending to dissoluteness, and the destruction of their Souls, to the great grief of their Parents, and the dishonour of God; and that the place being of great licentiousness and liberty to Children, they could not educate them, nor could they give them due correction without reproof or reproach from their Neighbours.

"Fourthly, That their Posterity would in few generations become *Dutch* and so lose their interest in the *English* Nation; they being desirous rather to enlarge His Majesties Dominions, and to live under their Natural PRINCE.

"Fifthly and lastly, and which was not the least, a great hope and inward Zeal they had of laying some good Foundation, or at least to make some way thereunto, for the propagating and advancement of the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the World, yea, altho' they should be but as stepping stones unto others for the performance of so great a Work."

In the Preamble of the Articles of Confederation, in 1643, it is said: "Whereas we all came into these parts of America with one and the same end and aim, namely, to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to enjoy the liberties of the Gospel in purity with peace," &c.—*Winthrop's Journal.*

B. [p. 11.]

For illustrations of these statements, see Baird's "Religion in America," "Synopsis of Missions," Morse and Parish's History of New England, Thomas Robbins's "New England Fathers," &c. &c. But the subject demands more attention, than it has ever received.

C. [p. 14.]

The Records of the First Church, previous to 1660, are supposed to be lost. In the Records of the Tabernacle Church, there is a Transcript of a Pamphlet entitled, "A Copy of the Church Covenants which have been used in the Church of Salem, formerly, and in their late reviewing of the Covenant on the day of the Public Fast, April 15th, 1680. * * * Boston, printed at the desire and for the use of many in Salem, for themselves and children, by J. F., 1680." It begins as follows:—"There was a Church Covenant agreed upon and consented to by the Church of Salem at their first beginning in the year 1629, Aug. 6th."

"The following Covenant was propounded by the Pastor, was agreed upon and consented to by the brethren of the Church, in the year 1636.

"We whose names are here underwritten, members of the present Church of Christ in Salem, having found by sad experience how dangerous it is to sit loose from the covenant we make with our God, and how apt we are to wander into by-paths, even unto the loosing (losing?) of our first aims in entering into church fellowship; do therefore solemnly in the presence of the eternal God, both for our own comforts, and those who

shall or may be joined unto us, *renew the Church Covenant we find this Church bound unto at their first beginning*, viz: 'That we covenant with the Lord, and one with another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in all his ways, according as he is pleased to reveal himself unto us in his blessed word of truth;' *and do more explicitly, in the name and fear of God, profess and protest to walk as followeth*, through the power and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"1. We avouch the Lord to be our God, and ourselves to be his people, in the truth and simplicity of our spirits.

"2. We give ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the word of his grace, for the teaching, ruling, and sanctifying of us in matters of worship and conversation, resolving to cleave unto him alone for life and glory, and to reject all contrary ways, canons, and institutions of men in his worship."

The other articles are the same, as commonly published in what has erroneously been said, so many times, to be "doubtless the first Church Covenant ever drawn in America."

In a printed Tract, without date, but undoubtedly issued in the year 1680, we have the "Confession of Faith" with a form of "Covenant," "for substance," as adopted 6th of August, 1629. The expression "*for substance*" implies, of course, that the original was neither less in quantity, nor different in quality. The Tract may be found in the Boston Athenæum, B. 76, Sermons. It is entitled,

"A Direction for a public profession in the Church Assembly, after private examination by the elders. Which direction is taken out of the Scripture, and points unto that faith and covenant contained in the Scripture. Being the same for substance which was propounded to and agreed upon by the Church of Salem, at their begining, the *sixth of the sixth month*, 1629."

"THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

"I do believe with my heart and confess with my mouth.

"*Concerning God.*—That there is but one only true God in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, each of them God, and all of them one and the same Infinite, Eternal God, most Holy, Just, Merciful and Blessed forever.

"*Concerning the works of God.*—That this God is the Maker, Preserver and Governor of all things according to the counsel of his own will, and that God made man in his own Image, in Knowledge, Holiness and Righteousness.

"*Concerning the fall of Man.*—That Adam by transgressing the command of God, fell from God and brought himself and his posterity into a state of sin and death, under the wrath and curse of God, which I do believe to be my own condition by nature as well as any other.

"*Concerning Jesus Christ.*—That God sent his Son into the world, who for our sakes became man, that he might redeem us and save us by his obedience unto death, and that he arose from the dead, ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God, from whence he shall come to judge the world.

"*Concerning the Holy Ghost.*—That God the Holy Ghost hath fully revealed the doctrine of Christ and the will of God in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which are the word of God, the perfect, perpetual, and only rule of our Faith and obedience.

"*Concerning the benefits we have by Christ.*—That the same Spirit by working faith in God's Elect, applyeth unto them Christ with all his benefits of justification and sanctification unto salvation, in the use of those ordinances which God hath appointed in his written word, which therefore ought to be observed by us unto the coming of Christ.

"*Concerning the Church of Christ.*—That all true believers being committed unto Christ as the head, make up one Mistical Church, which is the body of Christ, the members whereof, having fellowship with the Father,

Son, and Holy Ghost by faith, and one with another in love, do receive here upon earth forgiveness of sins, with the life of grace, and at the resurrection of the body they shall receive everlasting life.

"THE COVENANT.

"I do heartily take and avouch this one God who is made known to us in the Scripture, by the name of God the Father, and God the Son even Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Ghost, to be my God, according to the tenour of the Covenant of Grace; wherein he hath promised to be a God to the faithful and their seed after them in their generations, and taketh them to be his people, and therefore unfeignedly repenting of all my sins, I do give up myself wholly to this God, to believe in, to love, serve, and obey him sincerely and faithfully, according to his written word, against all the temptations of the devil, the world, and my own flesh, and this unto the death.

"I do also consent to be a member of this particular Church, promising to continue steadfastly in fellowship with it, in the public worship of God, to submit to the Order, Discipline, and Goverment of Christ in it, and to the ministerial teaching, guidance and oversight of the Elders of it, and to the brotherly watch of the Fellow-Members; and all this according to God's word and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, enabling me thereunto. AMEN."

D. [p. 19.]

"After God had carried us safe to New England, and we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government,—one of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance Learning, and perpetuate it to posterity—dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust.

"And as we were thinking and consulting how to effect this great work, it pleased God to stir up the heart of one Mr. Harvard, a godly gentleman and a lover of learning, there living amongst us, to give the one-half of his estate, it being in all about £1,700, towards the erecting of a College, and all his Library. After him another gave £300; others after them cast in more; and the public hand of the State added the rest."—*New England's First Fruits.—Young's Chronicles of Massachusetts.* p. 551. NOTE.

Free schools had been previously established in Holland. In New England they began in the Church. The first free school, *as a civil institution*, is believed to have been in Salem.

E. [p. 26.]

Robert Cushman, in his "Epistle Dedicatory" of his Sermon preached at Plymouth, in 1621, gives some geographical account of New England. He speaks of it as 'being Champion ground, but no high mountains, &c.; full of Rivers and Sweet Springs, as *England* is. But principally, so far as we can yet find, it is an island, and near about the quantity of *England*, being cut out from the main Land in *America*, as *England* is from the main of *Europe*, by a great arm of the Sea, which entereth in forty Degrees, and runneth up North West and by West, and goeth out either into the South-Sea, or else into the Bay of *Canada*. The certainty whereof, and secrets of which, we have not yet so found as that as eye-witnesses we can make narration thereof, but if God give time and means, we shall, ere long, discover both the extent of that River, together with the secrets thereof; and so try what Territories, Habitation, or Commodities, may be found, either in it, or about it.'

F. [p. 31.]

As it regards the difficulties with Roger Williams, and his true character, the reader is referred to several very able articles in the "Christian Observatory." The Editor has investigated the whole subject, in the most thorough manner. See also Dr. Cheever's "Journal of the Pilgrims," &c. Chap. XVIII. "Our fathers," says Mr. McClure, "turned Mr. Williams

out of doors, because he was tearing their house to pieces. For performing this necessary act of self-preservation, we leave them to be vindicated by John Quincy Adams, that foe of bigotry, and firm friend of civil and religious liberty. In a discourse published by him some six years since, after a candid statement of the facts, he asks: 'Can we blame the founders of the Massachusetts Colony for banishing him from within their jurisdiction? In the annals of religious persecution, is there to be found a martyr more gently dealt with by those against whom he began the war of intolerance? whose authority he persisted, even after professions of penitence and submission, in defying, till deserted even by the wife of his bosom? and whose utmost severity of punishment upon him was only an order for his removal as a *nuisance* from among them?'" * * "Williams's colony was obliged to procure the help of Massachusetts in banishing the fanatical Gorton and his outlaws; obtaining an illegal extension, over their own territory, of the very laws by which Williams was then excluded from Massachusetts. This hard necessity of theirs, may amply excuse the like necessity on the part of 'the people of the Bay.'"

If any one will read Morton's account of the dismission of Roger Williams from the Church of Plymouth, and of the subsequent proceedings at Salem and Boston, it will be seen, that the same view was taken of him in both colonies. The Church "consented" to his dismission, "through the prudent counsel of Mr. Brewster, (the Ruling Elder there,) fearing that his continuance amongst them might cause divisions, and there being many able men in the Bay, *they would better deal with him than themselves could*, and foreseeing (what he feared concerning Mr. *Williams*, which afterwards came to pass) that he would run the same course of rigid separation and Anabaptistry, which Mr. *John Smith*, the Sebaptist at *Amsterdam* had done," &c.

Roger Williams was not banished for being a Baptist. He NEVER WAS A BAPTIST *in Massachusetts*, and but "*for three months*" in Rhode Island.

In respect to the "intolerance" attributed to "the fathers," Dr. Cheever's remarks concerning the "Brownes" at Salem, are much to the purpose. Take, for example, a single paragraph.

"'I will be tolerant of every thing else,' said Mr. Coleridge, 'but every other man's intolerance.' Now here it was plainly the intolerance of others, not their religion, of which Governor Endicott would not be tolerant. And in this thing he and the colonists were evidently guided by Infinite Wisdom. For, if the churchmen had been permitted to go on, there would have been an end to this sanctuary of freedom in the wilderness. There would have been no New England in existence, in the history of which there should be scope for a sneer at the piety, or the freedom, or the superstition of its founders. Their *not* being suffered to go on, is the reason why they, and all other sects, even Bunyan's Giant Grim, with his nails pared, are here in quiet now. God, in his gracious divine providence, would not suffer any others than the persecuted Puritanic Dissenters to get footing here, until both in the Old World and the New, the great lesson of religious liberty had been more fully taught and understood. He had much light yet for Cromwell and the Independents of England to pour upon this question. The sneers at the course of our Pilgrim Fathers are sneers against the providence of God and the freedom of man."

It was "in the Bay," that the innovating spirits were disposed to settle. The attractions to emigrants were very few at Plymouth. In ten years the Colony had but three hundred souls. And although it has sometimes been intimated, that the Church there was much more tolerant than the Churches "in the Bay," there really is no valid proof, as yet furnished, that there was any difference in *principle*, or prevailing opinions. And if there be any *appearance* in favor of Plymouth, it is at once explained by a difference of the circumstances; or the operation of such causes as make some men more "prudent" than others, and not unwilling to evade personal responsibility, instead of acting with decision and firmness.

God's Law Unchangeable in its Claims.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

ELIOT CHURCH, NEWTON, MS.

ON THE

ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

LANDING OF THE PILGRIMS,

Dec. 22, 1850.

BY REV. W. S. LEAVITT,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

Published by Request.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF J. HOWE, 39 MERCHANTS ROW.

1851.

SERMON.

LUKE XVI: 17.

"IT IS EASIER FOR HEAVEN AND EARTH TO PASS, THAN ONE TITTLE OF THE LAW TO FAIL."

This day—the 22d of December—is widely recognized and hallowed as the anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock. It is a day worthy to be had in perpetual remembrance by all the sons of New England. We point to our civil and religious freedom; to our churches and schools; to the intelligence of the people; to their industry; to their unrivalled progress in all the arts of peace; to their success in every department of enterprise; and are justly and honestly proud of all these things, as the legitimate results of that event—as results whose causes can be distinctly traced back to the planting of those heroic footsteps on Plymouth Rock. And if the inspired prophet had then stood in this land, and seen its wilds overrun with heathen tribes, and seen also with prophetic eye what it was to become in two hundred years, well might he have exclaimed, "How beautiful upon this rock-bound coast are the feet of them that bring glad tidings, that publish peace."

But while the sons of the Pilgrims build the tombs of their fathers, and garnish the sepulchres of those righteous men, they ought not to renounce their principles, or deny any of those great truths which have made New England what it is. They ought to be

their children in truth and in principle, as well as in name and in blood. Our Pilgrim Fathers were noble men; they had many points of greatness; they have left the impress of themselves upon the world. But the fact which stands out most prominently in their history is, that they were religious men. Their great characteristic was reverence for God and for his Law. Many points in their history may have been disputed, but no one ever dreamed of disputing this. And I have thought that this day — the anniversary of their establishment here — afforded a fit occasion, at the present time, for considering one of those great principles of theirs — a doctrine which had, perhaps, more to do than any other in forming their characters, and deciding their destinies, and bringing down upon the generations of their children the blessings of God. That principle is the one declared in the text: that

GOD'S LAW IS UNCHANGEABLE IN ITS CLAIMS.

In the first place, because its foundation is unchangeable. On what is the Law of God founded? This question, it will be seen, is of the utmost importance to our subject. For if this foundation be any thing which it is possible to change, then there is a possibility that the claims of the Law may be altered too. It is a question, also, to which very different answers have bven given. It has been said that the will of God is the foundation of his Law; and that it is our duty to obey, simply because God commands, and for no other reason. This is a very general opinion, and perhaps some of my hearers will be surprised if I venture to express my dissent. I wish to be distinctly understood: — every thing that agrees with the will of God must be right of course, because that will is always

right. God's Law is of course an expression of his will, and must be in accordance with it; it is itself God's will, and can never be otherwise than right. But what I mean to say is, this is not a full account of the matter: there must be some reason for this will — some reason why God commands us to love our neighbor instead of forbidding it — some reason why he forbids murder, instead of saying, "Thou shalt kill." I mean that God's will is not a merely arbitrary will, existing without a reason, and proclaimed because he has the power; but there is a reason lying back of this, why he wills, commands, and forbids as he does. If it were not so, then it was by mere accident that God's Law is what it is, and if he had commanded us to worship idols, to hate our neighbor, to murder and to steal, it would have been just as much our duty to obey as it is now. But you will say it is impossible that God should have commanded these. Very true — and why is it impossible? If his will is arbitrary, and without a reason, then there was no impossibility in its being otherwise: if there was no reason why he commanded as he did, there was no reason why he might not have commanded exactly the opposite. It is because there is a standard of right and wrong, distinct from mere arbitrary will, to which God's holy nature must conform, and which is the foundation of his Law. To this standard God himself appeals when he calls upon men to judge concerning the uprightness of his conduct. "O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me." "Are not my ways equal?"

The language of Scripture throughout, confirms this view. "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity." Now if God's will is the foundation and the

standard of righteousous, this expression simply means that he loves his own will, and hates what is opposed to it—which any being might do, no matter what his character, whether infinitely wicked or infinitely good. It gives no insight into the character of God, to say that he does right because he does according to his will. If this be the standard of right, it amounts simply to this: he does according to his will because it is his will so to do. Such a character would be one of willfulness, not of right. We are told that God is "just and right"—does that mean only that he does as he pleases? that he cannot sin—does that mean only that he cannot act in opposition to his own will? What idea can we have of the uprightness of a being who wills without a reason, and acts upon this arbitrary will? Have we not an idea of rectitude distinct from this? and must we not say that God is righteous, that his Law is holy, and his commandment holy, just, and good, not because he doeth his will, but because his will is right? We are forced, then, to the conclusion, that there is a standard of right beyond the mere will of God, and that his will is right because it conforms to this standard, and his Law is binding because it rests on this foundation. What this standard is we shall presently consider.

Again; it has been said that God's Law is founded in utility; that he commands some things, and forbids others, only because they will occasion good or evil to the universe. In other words, that the moral quality of an action lies not in itself, nor in its motives, but in its effects. But if this be so, then the doctrine that the end sanctifies the means is unquestionably true. Then there can be no such thing as "doing evil that good may come;" for no matter what amount of fraud,

falsehood or crime be employed to effect the end — if the actual result is more good than evil, all was virtuous and right. It cannot be that God's Law, or his principles of action rest upon a foundation like this. I do not mean to deny that righteousness is better than sin, better in its tendencies, better in its effects: but there is a moral quality in actions distinct from this. God commands virtue, not its effects; and forbids not the consequences of sin, but sin itself. But if utility were the foundation of his Law, there could be no virtue, there could be no sin, except in their consequences. It is plain, then, that we have not yet reached the object of our search.

What then is the foundation of the Law of God? It is founded not in arbitrary will, not in a mere regard to consequences — but in the very nature of things. By this, I mean that it is impossible to imagine moral beings placed in certain relations, without having at once the idea of duty, of obligation, of right and wrong. For example, the relation of parent and child instantly suggests the idea of respect and obedience as the duty of the child. We say at once, it is right for him to render these, and wrong to refuse. We do not reason on the subject. We do not say it is right because it is the will of God — we should say the same if we knew nothing of his will. We do not say it is right because it is best for the child to obey his parent — but simply because the parental relation exists. We can go no farther than this. We can give no other account of the matter. We have reached an ultimate fact, a first principle in morals, a self-evident truth. We see and believe the duty, not because we can give a reason for it, but because we cannot help seeing and believing. The mere fact of the parental relation —

the very nature of things — establishes the duty of the child. So the idea of justice, of our duty to regard the rights of our neighbor, to respect his property and his life — this idea arises in our minds from the very fact, that we have a neighbor. And we feel that our duty in this respect would be the same if God had never commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

In the same way, we have certain duties towards God, not because he has commanded them, but because he is God, and we are his creatures. In the very nature of things these duties cannot be disjoined from this relation. Now this nature and fitness of things plainly is not built upon the Law of God; it is itself the foundation of that Law. God's Law is but the expression of this nature of things; the utterance of this eternal rule of right — and *now* we see why it can never be changed. For until the whole nature of things can be made anew; till good can become evil, and evil be changed to good; till the moral sense of God and man can proclaim its own falsehood; and justice, mercy and truth be made to consist in falsehood, violence and crime — God's Law and its claims npon men must be the same. But it is impossible, it is absurd, to suppose that this change can take place. Therefore the Law is immovable, founded on the nature of things; and its claims unchanging as the throne of God. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the Law to fail."

In the second place, God's Law is unchangeable in its claims, because the relations in which men are viewed by the Law can never be changed. They can never cease to be creatures of God, and therefore subjects of his government. They can never cast off their

allegiance, or declare themselves independent of his control. They can never reach a point where they shall have discharged forever all their obligations to God, and where they no longer owe him homage and love. If they could be placed in any such position, it is plain that the claims of the Law in this respect would cease; but it is equally plain that such a thing is impossible. Men *are* creatures of God, and nothing can destroy this fact: of course the duties that belong of necessity to the relation of creature and Creator, can never be set aside. The character of God can never cease to be worthy of our love; of course to love must always be our duty. Nothing can be done to take us out from these relations, and sever the chain of obligations that binds us to God. We can never yield the Creator so much worship that it will be right for us thenceforth to withhold it. We can never love God so much that we shall gain the right to hate him. We can never obey his commands so long that obedience will become a sin. And if our relations as subjects of God, and our duties to him while in those relations can never cease, when and how shall the claims of his Law be changed.

Neither can our relations and duties to other beings ever cease. If a man were placed in the midst of a desert, with no other being near him, and ignorant that any other existed in the universe — then, indeed, he would not be called upon to love his neighbor as himself: not because the Law was changed, but simply because he had no neighbor to love. He would not be commanded to respect the rights of his fellow man; not because the nature of things was changed, and it was no longer a duty to respect the rights of others, but because he had no fellow man. If such a case as

this existed, the nature of right and wrong would not be changed; the Law would not be set aside, only its claims in this respect would not be enforced, because the man was no longer in the relation contemplated by the Law. But only set him back again amid society, or bring a single human being to share his solitude, and that moment he is a debtor to the Law. He has a neighbor whom he ought to love; a fellow man whose rights it is his duty to respect. The moment this relation begins, the moment two beings exist together — that moment their mutual rights and duties commence. But no case like the one supposed can happen. The relations of men to their fellow men can never be broken off. Or if their neighbor be not actually present, before their eyes, and within the reach of their kind offices and their practical benevolence — still they cannot forget that he exists; and remembering this, in their hearts they can obey the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And if, even alone in the desert, when they think of their fellow men, that benevolence which is not bounded by space or time — the desire for the happiness of all who can be happy — does not arise in their minds — they are not guiltless in the sight of God.

We have gone thus far, then, in our argument. We have seen that the foundation of God's Law is unchangeable, because it rests on the very nature of things; that the duties which the Law commands are of necessity binding on men in certain relations; and that these relations — involving the rights of God and their neighbor — can never cease. I see not, therefore, how we can escape the conclusion that God's Law is unchangeable in its claims.

But it will, perhaps, be said, All this would be true if the Gospel had not been introduced; but the effect of this has been to change the relations of men to the Law, and, in some degree at least, to set aside its claims. I remark, therefore,

In the third place, the proposition we are considering is true, because it was not the object of the gospel to set aside the Law. What the gospel has done is something very different from this. When the herald of Messiah, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," was heard among the Jews — what was the burden of his message? Did he proclaim the downfall of the Law? the abrogation of its claims? the repeal of the commands of God? Did he declare that men were no longer under obligation to do right? Did he offer freedom from the Law, and impunity in sin? "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of God is at hand. Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire." There is nothing in this that announces a coming overthrow of the Law; for if it were so, why should repentance and a holy life be the subject of his discourse? And when the heavenly host took up on the plains of Bethlehem the chorus, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men," was it in their minds to rejoice, because the rule of right was set aside, and men were no longer bound to bear the image of God? But if the object of the gospel was to set aside the Law, this must have been the ground of their rejoicing, this the burden of their hymns of praise.

Will it be said that Jesus Christ taught that the Law had come to an end? What was the theme of his first great discourse — the sermon on the Mount? "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: for I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled." And what was the object of that sermon but to rescue the Law from the traditions of the elders by which they had made it void, and set it before the consciences of men in all its purity and in all its spiritual power? And throughout all his ministry, we never find him relaxing the claims of the Law, letting down the standard of righteousness, teaching any looser morality, or demanding any thing less than perfect obedience to God. So far from this, he taught the strictest, the purest morality that ever fell from the lips of man; he presented the claims of the Law with unequalled power; and in all things most completely did he fulfill that which was spoken of him by the prophet; "He will magnify the Law, and make it honorable."

But has not the death of Christ put an end to the Law? has not his atonement forever satisfied its claims? or at least, has it not done something to make less strict the requirements of God? In answer to this, let us consider what it is that the atonement has done. The Bible represents mankind as lost in sin; alienated from God by wicked works; disobedient to his Law, and lying under its curse. It represents God as looking upon this ruin, and declaring that he has found a remedy; in the fulness of his love providing a ransom — but how? Not by repealing his eternal Law; not by relaxing its claims to accommodate the depravity of men; not by receiving to his friendship

the wicked, all stained with sin, and unrepenting in their hearts — this was not the way in which Divine compassion was displayed; this was not the salvation he proclaimed. But his design was to reconcile justice and mercy; to save the sinner, and yet maintain his Law. For this end the atonement was made. And with this view God gave his Son to die for the world; he made his soul an offering for sin; and thus declared his unyielding purpose to uphold the claims and the honor of his Law. For if even the repenting sinner could be pardoned only through the blood of Christ, then was it plain that he never would suffer his commands with impunity to be disobeyed. And not only this, but the salvation purchased by the cross was a holy salvation. Christ gave himself for us "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." If, then, to restore mankind to holiness and the image of God was the work of the atonement, of course to break down the Law, to relax its claims, was not its object, was not its effect.

Besides, it was utterly impossible for the atonement to set aside the Law. For, as we have seen, the foundations of the Law cannot be changed; it is simply a declaration of those things which are in their own nature forever right and wrong. No atonement can change this. No atonement can make that right which is wrong in itself. The blood of Christ can cleanse from sin; it can whisper peace and pardon to the soul; it can wash out the stains, and make the scarlet white as snow — but it cannot change the moral quality of actions; it cannot transform sin into righteousness, nor make virtue out of crime; it cannot move the firm foundations of the Law of God. It adds ten-fold ob-

ligations to keep the Law; for he who breaks it now, sins also against redeeming love.

Again, the apostles — the inspired expounders of the gospel — never taught that it set aside the Law, or in the least degree relaxed its claims. When they "conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law," they add at once, "Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law." But Paul says, "Ye are not under the Law, but under grace." True — and what does he mean? that Christians are not bound to obey the Law? or that any thing less than perfect obedience will suffice? Look at the passage in its connection, and see if any such meaning can be found. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the Law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin because we are not under the Law but under grace? God forbid." The fact that Christians are not under the Law, but under grace, is urged as a reason *against* sin, and not in its favor; as a motive to greater holiness, and not to less. Whatever it means therefore, it cannot mean that the rule of right is set aside, or the standard of virtue let down by the gospel. But the interpretation plainly is, that Christians are not under the Law as a means of salvation; that they seek to be justified not by their own righteous deeds, but by the free grace of God; and it is because they are thus justified, and created anew after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness, that sin must not reign in their mor-

tal bodies. The whole burden of the New Testament is righteousness; all its teachings are holiness to the Lord; and throughout the whole, the Law of God is held up as the only standard of virtue, as the eternal and unchanging rule of life.

The Law and the Gospel are not at war. They do not speak in discordant tones. The thunders of Sinai are in harmony with the anthems of Bethlehem, the groans of the cross, and the chorus of the redeemed. The Gospel does not, cannot overthrow the Law; it maintains, it advocates, it enforces its demands. It magnifies the Law and makes it honorable; and it urges us by all the added motives of a Saviour's love, to yield obedience to its commands. The Gospel sustains the Law; and declares that sooner shall the universe sink back to annihilation — sooner shall the eternal throne itself totter and fall, than one precept of God's Law be repealed, or one of its claims be set aside. "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the Law to fail." And if the Gospel and the atonement of Christ cannot set aside the Law, then certainly nothing else can.

Our subject teaches us this lesson:

IF GOD'S LAW IS UNCHANGEABLE IN ITS CLAIMS, THEN IT IS HIGHER THAN ANY HUMAN LAW.

All human law has its authority from God; and it can never be binding except so far as it can be obeyed consistently with our obedience to God. It may be our duty to submit to a law that unjustly requires us to *suffer* wrong; but we have no right to obey a law that requires us to *do* wrong. If we obey it, we do not satisfy the claims of the Divine Law, and are under its penalty; for that unchangingly requires us to do right. And when God's Law and man's law come in conflict, we must give God's the preference, for

we are sure in such a case that the law of man is wrong, and to obey it would be a sin. If there be an ordinance of man which we can obey only by disobeying God, then surely no man who fears God will hesitate what to do.

If then, there be a law which opposes itself to the commands of God, to those requirements of humanity which are based on the eternal fitness of things: a law which requires us to violate God's commands, and act from a spirit that is hostile to the spirit of Christ—all the constitutions in the world cannot make that law of binding force. It is a struggle for life between man's law and God's Law; and man's law must perish, for heaven and earth shall pass away, before one tittle of God's Law shall fail.

The Scriptures teach the rules of duty both by precept and by example. On this point examples are not wanting. A law was passed in the kingdom of Babylon, requiring all men at certain times to fall down and worship an image of gold, which the king had set up. There were three Jews in that kingdom, servants of the Most High God, who refused obedience to the law. And they did it knowingly, deliberately, and with full intent to disobey. They did not say merely that they disapproved of the law; that they regretted that it was passed, and trusted it would be modified or repealed; nor did they say that so long as it was not repealed it was the law of the land, and they, as good citizens, were bound to regard it. But they took their stand on those eternal principles of right which no human enactments can change; and they told the monarch of Babylon to his face, "Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image, which thou hast set up." And when,

for their disobedience, they were cast into the burning fiery furnace, God sent one whose form was like unto the Son of Man, to testify his approbation of what they had done, and to keep them, so that even the smell of the fire was not found upon their garments.

At another time, in the same kingdom of Babylon, a law was passed — and it was according to the constitution of the Medes and Persians, which changeth not — forbidding any one to pray for a certain length of time. And when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he had done before; and when he was cast into the den of lions, God shut the mouths of the lions, that they harmed him not — and miserable was the end of those who had procured the enactment of the law.

But humanity is as much a part of religion as godliness; the second table of the Law is as binding as the first; and an ordinance that forbids kindness to the oppressed, or makes humanity a crime, is at least as wicked as one that requires us to bow down to idols, or to refrain from prayer, and as little to be obeyed. Human enactments never can set aside the changeless claims of the Law of God.

This doctrine — that God's Law is higher than any human law, because it is unchangeable in its claims — is the foundation of all missionary operations, from the days of the apostles to the present time. The Church has always referred to this doctrine for its authority to spread the Gospel among the heathen. The apostles in Jerusalem taught doctrines which were calculated to overthrow the religious institutions of the Jews. Their rulers "called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and

John answered, and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." And when they persisted in this course, they were set before the council, charged with sedition, "and the high priest asked them, saying, Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, "*We ought to obey God rather than man.*" And this declaration has been the watch-word of all the faithful missionaries of Christ to this day. They could do nothing without it. They go forth to overthrow institutions that are established by law. They set themselves against the powers that be, in this matter. But "the powers that be are ordained of God" in heathen India, or in the domains of the Sultan, as much as in heathen Rome, concerning which, Paul uttered this assertion. And they were ordained of God in heathen Rome, and are now ordained in heathen India, as much as they are in Christian America. And if this doctrine be not correct, then are those bands of missionaries whom we have sent forth, and whom we love and cherish and encourage in their work, fanatical disorganizers and leaders of sedition. But they assume that they ought to obey God rather than man; and we — the Churches and Christians of this land — sustain them in it. They take the ground that they have a right, as individuals, to decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong; and whether any law that conflicts with God's Law is to be obeyed. They do not go to the "regularly organized tribunals," and ask of them whether they must obey a law that forbids them to preach the Gospel, and to oppose the national religion. But they go to that tri-

bunal which is in every man's breast — the tribunal of their own conscience — and, following its decisions, they disregard, and disobey the laws of man. And if this principle is to be abandoned, the work of missions must, in many cases, be given up; the missionaries must come home; and the heathen world be left to perish without the knowledge of God.

The Christian community has always acted on the principle that if the laws of man must be disobeyed, in order to do what is right in the sight of God, it must be done. It is well known that in modern Italy, the powers that be — which are ordained of God in the same sense as any other powers that be — forbid the circulation of the Scriptures. It is well known also, that it is now but a few weeks, since meetings were held in Boston, which were attended by many of the most respected and influential of the Christian community, to hear accounts of the violations of that law, and the illegal circulation of the Scriptures in Rome. And the object of those meetings, and the thing actually done by those Christians who were gathered there, was not to send word to the resisters of the law in Italy, "We are sorry that such a law exists; but it is the law; and it would be sedition, disunion, and treason in you to disobey it; you must give up the distribution of the Scriptures till the law shall be repealed." But their object was, and those Christian men virtually said, in the true spirit of their Protestant and Puritan fathers, "We applaud you; we will encourage you; we will raise money to aid you in that violation of the law. Go on, and distribute the word of Life, law or no law." And who is there here who will reproach those Christians — our friends and fathers and brethren in the ministry and in the church — with being encouragers of sedition, and with wickedly incit-

ing others to resist the powers that be? Who will not say, they are doing right. And if a contribution were asked for, this day, in this house, to help those noble-hearted Italians to circulate the Bible in opposition to the laws, who is there here who would not feel it a privilege to give?

This doctrine — that God's Law is higher than man's law — is identical with the great Protestant doctrine of the right of private judgment — that doctrine which distinguishes the Protestant from the Papal world, as the land of Goshen was distinguished when all the rest of Egypt was covered with darkness that might be felt. This doctrine is, that every man is to decide what his faith and duty must be, by his own conscience; and that no human authority can come between his conscience and his God. No one else can make these decisions for him; and no one else can bear the responsibility of them when they are made. The foundation of Protestantism is, that it is the right and the duty of every man to decide for himself what the Bible teaches, what doctrines, what duties, what is right for him to do, and what is wrong — that he may not escape from this duty, nor give up this privilege to any human tribunal or authority whatever. And no man can be a consistent Protestant who holds any doctrine differing from this. This doctrine is, that God's word is higher than all human teachings, and his Law than all human laws. The view of Protestantism is, that if all the laws, governments, and tribunals in the world, require a man to do what, in the exercise of his right of private judgment, he believes to be contrary to the will of God, he must refuse — at the risk of martyrdom even, he must refuse. If this be not so, we may go back to the dark ages again, and put ourselves under Papal rule, and give our consciences to be trampled

under foot by the man of sin. But if we have the right to decide for ourselves, how we ought to obey God, how much more have we the right to determine how we ought to obey man. When you can find me a court or a government that will transfer my guilt to itself, and take the punishment of my sins at the judgment day, then I may consent to sin at its command — and not before.

Our Pilgrim Fathers acted on this principle. It was the one great principle on which they acted. They reverenced God before man; and the throne of God before any throne or power of man; and the Laws of God before any laws or tribunals of man. This was their doctrine before they left their native land. It was this doctrine that brought them to Plymouth Rock. The powers that be are ordained of God in England, and were then. There were laws there, which the highest tribunals sanctioned and enforced. But our fathers — in opposition to the judgment of courts, parliaments, and kings — believed them to be wicked laws, requiring them to do what was wrong in the sight of God — and they refused to obey. They secretly evaded the laws; they openly resisted them; and they urged and encouraged one another so to do. They were fined — and they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and went on in their poverty to resist the law. They were imprisoned — and the moment they obtained release, they returned again to their resistance of the law. And it was to escape from the persecutions which their repeated and unyielding resistance to wicked laws had brought upon them, that they came here, and laid the foundation of New England's glory and prosperity in the grand doctrine of *Conscience before courts, and God's Law before all the enactments of kings and people.*

And now I ask, in all seriousness, are we, the sons of New England, going to forget all these things? Are we going to say that this doctrine — which is the glory of our fathers — is sedition and treason? Are we going to proclaim to the world our own degeneracy and shame, by saying that we will not do as our fathers did? and that we are really ashamed that such treasonable blood is flowing in our veins? For myself, when I remember that I count among my fathers THOMAS HOOKER, the first minister of the gospel within the ancient limits of this town; and when I read how he refused to obey a wicked law, and how, for this refusal, he was pursued from one hiding place to another, till he found a refuge here — I can but say, Let me inherit his spirit with his blood.

The Puritans of England, in all those struggles for liberty, which ended in their victory over Charles I., and the government of Cromwell, acted on this doctrine — that God's Law is higher than human law. And no one needs to be told that our fathers in New England perfectly sympathised with them in their principles and in their conflicts. And there is hardly a child who has not heard the story of those two judges, who had pronounced sentence of death upon their king, and who, on the restoration of monarchy, fled to this land — the honored names of GOFFE and WHALLEY — those outlaws, those fugitives, whom all good citizens were forbidden to harbor, and commanded to arrest. And who does not know how the fathers of New England protected those fugitives, harbored them, fed and clothed them, refused to arrest them, obstructed the marshals and officers of the law in their efforts to seize them, and gave those outlawed fugitives a welcome to every dwelling where a hiding place could be found? Often have I visited the cave

where they were concealed; and where those heroic New Englanders watched over and fed those fugitives whom all men were forbidden to feed. And often have I seen those words, carved in the rock, which tradition ascribes to them, "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God."

And once more I ask, are we — the children of the Puritans — going to forget all these things? It is this doctrine of the supremacy of conscience and the Law of God which has made New England what it is. And New England's glory is lost when her sons shall put courts and legislatures before conscience, and human laws before the Law of God. Are we going to abandon this precious heritage of our fathers? Are we going back to that doctrine of passive obedience, against which our fathers preached and fought? This principle of theirs was the germ of American freedom. Are we going to give it up? Are we going to make slaves of ourselves also? Are we — New England citizens, and New England Christians — going to spurn at conscience, and laugh to scorn the idea of a higher law? Are we — on this anniversary of the Landing on Plymouth Rock — going to allow any tribunal, or any human authority to come between our consciences and our God?

Thoughts like these can hardly fail to crowd themselves upon our minds this day. They are the thoughts of freedom. They are the thoughts which were enstamped by the footsteps of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock. They are the thoughts which have echoed to and fro among the hills and valleys of New England from that day — until now. They are the thoughts which have been preached in every New England pulpit, reiterated in every popular assembly, and written in every book that tells of New England men. They

are the thoughts whose mighty influence shall regenerate the world, and make freedom and Christianity triumphant in all the earth. They are the thoughts that shall bear as on angel wings the day when Jesus Christ alone shall reign, King of kings, and Lord of lords. They are thoughts that must not, and cannot, and will not die.

Our Pilgrim Fathers have left us that example which has done so much for our temporal success — an example of cautious shrewdness, of prudent calculation, of untiring industry in secular pursuits. And they have also left us the higher and holier example of obedience to God in all circumstances, in defiance — if need be — of all human laws, and at all risks. And if, while we follow the former, we depart from the latter, shall we not well deserve the rebuke given to the degenerate sons of Ancient Greece —

> "Ye have the Pyrrhic dance as yet;
> Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
> Of two such lessons why forget
> The nobler and the manlier one?"

"The memory of the just is blessed." May the recollection of the faith and patience, and high principles of our fathers, be blessed to us this day. May it cause us to cling with a firmer grasp to that faith and those principles. May it write more deeply on our hearts the lesson, that our only duty is obedience to the changeless Law of God, and our only hope — as those who are sinners against that Law — is by faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ. Then shall the heritage of our fathers remain to us in its glory; and God — even our God, and their God — shall bless us.

A SERMON

PREACHED DEC. 17th, 1865, THE SUNDAY PRECEDING

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE

LANDING OF THE PILGRIMS,

BY

REV. CHARLES CARROLL EVERETT,

PASTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, OF

BANGOR.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

BANGOR:
Printed by B. A. Burr.
1865.

A SERMON

PREACHED DEC. 17th, 1865, THE SUNDAY PRECEDING

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The breaking waves dashed high
On a stern and rock-bound coast,
And the woods, against a stormy sky
Their giant branches toss'd;

And the heavy night hung dark
The hills and waters o'er,
When a band of exiles moor'd their bark
On the wild New England shore.

Not as the conquerer comes,
They, the true-hearted, came,
Not with the roll of the stirring drums,
And the trumpet that sings of fame;

Not as the flying come,
In silence and in fear,—
They shook the depths of the desert's gloom
With their hymns of lofty cheer.

Amidst the storm they sang,
And the stars heard and the sea!
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free!

The ocean-eagle soared
From his nest by the white wave's foam,
And the rocking pines of the forest roar'd—
This was their welcome home!

What sought they thus afar?
Bright jewels of the mine?
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war?—
They sought a faith's pure shrine!

Aye, call it holy ground,
The soil where first they trod!
They have left unstain'd what there they found—
Freedom to worship God!

SERMON.

* * * Thy pound hath gained ten pounds.—Luke 19, 16.

This week, will occur the grandest and the most sacred anniversary which marks the national year. We have other days, which are celebrated with more pomp. Our "Fourth of July" is ushered in by the peal of cannons, and lighted out by the blaze of fire-works. In these last years, we have studded the calender of the nation, all over, with sacred and famous days, days of victory, days on which Liberty arose in new grandeur and a larger universality of power, days which stir fresher and more tender memories in our souls. But on the twenty-second of December, if we did but realize it, we celebrate all these together. That contains, in germ, our fourth of July, our twenty-second of February, our first of January, sacred to Liberty, and our ninth of April, on which the nation stood one and triumphant. The little vessel, that bore, from Plymouth in old England to Plymouth in New England, the germ of a new nation, brought with it whatever the nation was to be, that is great and glorious. Our Washingtons, our Adamses, our Lincolns, our Grants, came over then. The stout hearts, the firm wills, the honest heads of those old Pilgrims contained just the principles, just the virtues, which, so far as our nation has been governed by principle, and ennobled by virtue, have controlled it and glorified it ever since.

You look back to that cold December, you see a little vessel floating in the bay, you see a little band of men and women setting their feet upon the shore, a shore that was doubly such, the ocean on one side and the barbarous wilderness on the other. Is this all you see?—Nay, look closer, and you will see churches and colleges and cities; you will see a commerce that whitens both

oceans, a wealth that controls both hemispheres, a luxury that draws from both. All of these are in the brave and true hearts of these pilgrims, that seemed at first so poor and desolate. Churches—they brought them in their pious souls. Colleges—they brought them in their eager brains. Wealth—they brought it in their indomitable wills, and in their hard and ready hands.

O nation, burdened with thy wealth, proud of thy vastness, flushed with the triumphs that adorn every page of thy history, come hither and see thy birthplace and thy early home!—But how shall the nation come? Shall it come proud of its present, and half ashamed of its past? Shall it see only the roughness and the rudeness, the penury, the hunger and the cold? Shall it come like some rich youth, that is half ashamed to be reminded of the humble cottage where he was born, of its bare walls and lowly roof?—Nay, perhaps that youth will remember something in that poor cottage, that is worth all his wealth and his honor. At least the nation can find such treasure. As it stands, on this anniversary, beholding the low estate, the privations, the sufferings of its first home, and its first life, it grows half ashamed of its wealth, of its luxury, of its greatness. It finds something there that is worth them all, a thousand fold. It finds principle, consecration, religious faith. It finds men who had enjoyed happy homes and comfortable firesides, and whatever of wealth was needed to make life outwardly prosperous, but who gave them all up for principle: who weighed all of this comfort and ease, on which we pride ourselves, and chose rather to be in the wilderness with God and a clear conscience, than in all the old-world-comfort without them. As the nation looks, its wealth loses something of its dazzling glitter; its material greatness loses something of its imposing majesty; its heart loses a little of its pride at its physical strength and all its outward show of magnificence. It sees, that principle and consecration and faith in God outweigh them all, as though they were the dust of the balance.

Shall the nation then stand humbled and self reproach-

ed, ashamed that it is so great, and so rich, and so magnificent?—No, thank God, there is no need of that. If it should come without pride which despises the past, it can come also without shame, that abases itself before it.—It also has done its work. It has borne its burden and fought its battle. It also has weighed money against principle and found it wanting; it also has devoted itself with a lofty consecration. It can then look the past calmly in the face, without vainglory and without humiliation. It owes to the past all things, and yet it has been true to the past, and carried on its work, and helped to fulfil its ideal.—Happy the man, who can return from his struggles with fortune, from the entanglements of business, whether loaded or not with its spoils, whether successful or not with what the world calls success, to the humble home of his boyhood, that is rich with sacred memories, that has been consecrated by religion, by integrity, by kindly generosity, and can say,—"The lesson I learnt here I have never forgotten,the virtue of my parents has not been tarnished in me. I owe them all, but, thank God, I have not dishonored them".—Happy the nation that can turn to such a beginning as that at Plymouth Rock, with a heart full of reverence: yet full too of a holy joy, that it has fought its good fight, and fulfilled its work, and carried on without disgrace, and with new honor, that which began in such pure devotion and in such earnest faith.

I know the faults and the vices of the present. I know too that the past had its faults. Those stern old Puritans were not perfect. Their faults were theirs, and ours are ours; but our virtues are theirs, and are derived from them; and to day, I would see only this shining line that binds us together.

This brings us to ask, What is the true way in which we should be able to approach the past, and compare ourselves with it.—There are different ways in which men love to look back upon the Puritans. Some regard them with mockery. They were stern, and merciless. Their religion was harsh and austere. They had no lightness; all was

rigid and arbitrary. But what—we may ask such mockers—what went ye out into the wilderness for to see? Reeds shaken with the wind?—But what went ye out for to see? Men clothed in soft raiment, men soft and mild in thought and speech or act? Those that wear soft raiment are in King's palaces. Had they been of such stuff, they would have staid, contented, as they were.—But what went ye out for to see? Prophets? Yea, I say unto you, and more than prophets. They were the forerunners and the beginners of the new epoch, and of all that have been born of woman there are none greater than they.—Others would approach the Puritans with unmixed reverence. They would seek to prove that they think and believe just as the fathers did. If they can go to Plymouth rock, and find that, word for word, their creed just fits the Puritans' belief, they feel themselves worthy to be reckoned as their children.—What is this but to say to them,—"We knew that you were harsh and stern; so we took your pound, and folded it in a napkin and laid it carefully away, here thou hast that is thine." Rather let us be of the number that shall say to them, "Thy pound hath gained ten pounds. Take thine own with usury."—The true descendants of the Puritans are not those who think what they thought, but those who think as they thought; not those who say what they said, but those who speak as they spoke. The Puritans were the foremost men of their generation. They were in advance of their age. They dared to think for themselves, and they dared to say what they thought. The Puritan of to-day is not he who stands where they stood, though it be on Plymouth Rock; and repeats their words, however sacred. But it is he who follows truth wherever she may lead, who welcomes her latest revelation, who is in earnest with the truth, who despises constraint and authority, and acknowledges no priest and no church, which can come between his soul and God.—The testimony then that I will bear to-day to the Puritans is, that their ideas have moulded this nation, their virtues have purified it, their devotion has ennobled it. But their ideas and their principles have not

been mere dead weight, transmitted from hand to hand; they have germinated and expanded. The ideas of the present are not the same as theirs, but they are parts of the same process.—Their pound has gained other ten pounds.—In a word, I would claim for the Puritans, that they are the source of our most advanced, most progressive, and most liberal thought; and I would claim for our most advanced, progressive and liberal thought, that it is the true representative and the true descendant of Puritanism in this generation.

Let us illustrate this by reference to the actual position of the early pilgrims. I will first speak of their church organization. And here I will quote directly from Palfrey's History of New England.

"A church was a company of believers, associated together by a mutual covenant to maintain and share Christian worship and ordinances, and to watch over each other's spiritual condition. The *covenants*—remarkably free in the earliest times from statements of doctrine—were what their name imports. They were mutual engagements in the presence of God, to walk together in all his ways, according as he was pleased to reveal himself in his blessed word of truth * * * A church officer, of whatever degree, was an officer only in his own congregation. The primitive doctrine of New England was, that no man was a clergyman in any sense, either before his election by a particular church, or after his relinquishment of the special trust so conferred; and that, even while in office, he was a layman to all the world except to his own congregation, and had no right to exercise any clerical function elsewhere. In the earliest times a minister was ordained, not by other ministers, but by officers of the church which elected him, or when it had no officers, then by some of its private members. This absolute mutual independence of the churches was in principle equivalent to universal mutual toleration; and if the original scheme of an ecclesiastical constitution had been carried out, there could have been no interference on behalf of the whole community, as represented by its government, with the belief or practises of any single congregation."*

It does not need much knowledge of history, to know

* Palfrey's History of New England, Vol. 2, pages 36 and 39.

how soon these principles were modified. They were so, because church membership was a pre-requisite for voting and holding office. Thus the central authorities felt called upon to control this matter of church membership. But of the Congregationalism of the Puritans, as represented by the Pilgrim Fathers, during the first years of their residence in America, our liberal churches are the true and only representatives. These churches which it has become the fashion not to include in the word Congregationalist, are the only churches, which are Congregational, in the sense in which the early Pilgrims were Congregational. I noticed in the papers a suggestion from a gathering of Congregationalists, that the ministers of Congregational societies preach to-day on Congregationalism, in reference to the approaching Forefathers day. As a Congregational minister, I accept the suggestion ; and I repeat, that our liberal and independent Congregational societies are the only ones, which represent at the present day, the Congregationalism, which was first planted on Plymouth Rock.

In regard to matters of doctrine, I confess, and I do it with joy, that the belief of the Pilgrim Fathers is not ours. Their thought of God is not ours. Their Sabbath is not ours, their notion of retribution is not ours. It is owing to our truth to their traditions, to their spirit and their history, that our belief thus differs. Those who have given up the independence of the Puritan Congregationalism have remained more fixed, and repeat more nearly the expression of the Puritan belief. We, who have accepted the original independence, which marked their Congregations, and their impatience of interference from without, have, by this very fact, and by the impulse which we received from them, been driven further along the course, on which they were moving.

If we turn from the church to the state, we find that though the political organization of the early Puritans was not a perfect Democracy, it was, perhaps, the nearest approach to a Democracy, that the world had seen. In the Puritan state, the original voters determined what new com-

ers should be voters. They elected them, as if into a close society. But still the power was in the hands of the people. The world has never seen, and perhaps will never see, a perfect Democracy. Our own State has affixed arbitrary limits to popular suffrage. Young men of the age of twenty cannot vote. Foreigners must remain here a certain length of time before they can vote. Women cannot vote. All of these lines are more or less arbitrary. Why should the line be drawn just here? All lines of this nature must be arbitrary. Yet there must always be some such lines. The child, for instance, will never be allowed to vote, and the point where the child becomes a man, must be always artificial and arbitrary. We have followed strictly the Puritans. The voters have, all along, marked the limitation of the right of suffrage. As our liberal churches have followed their traditions of freedom and independence, and have thus advanced to a broader faith, and a clearer insight into religious truth; so our state, following their fundamental principle of popular government, has reached a broader Democracy and a freer life. We received our capital from them. We owe them a debt of thanks, which can never be repaid. Yet, we have used that capital, not wholly in vain, and can meet them on this anniversary, with frank and grateful hearts, saying,—Thy pound hath gained ten pounds.—This is not self glorification. It was the nature of their principles to expand. Their claim to worship God, according to the dictates of their own conscience, could not help expanding into that right of all men thus to worship him, upon which their claim must rest. Their independence could not help leading to broader knowledge. Their Democracy could not help leading to a broader Democracy. All this could not help being, unless we were false to them and to ourselves.

I have spoken of their principles, as being the controling power of the nation. They settled New England only, yet their settlement was the planting of an idea. They were idealists, and nothing has the expansive force, the ruling power, of an idea. Other settlements were for gain, this for principle. Other colonies were planted in the

name of Mammon, this was planted in the name of God. Thus the other settlements had no more root-hold in the soil than the Indian tribes. They must yield before the expanding principles of this idea, as the Indians fled before an advancing civilization. The great West is mainly an outgrowth of New England. And now the South is becoming New Englandised. The very year, that the Mayflower reached Plymouth, with its freight of Liberty, came, like its dark shadow, the first slave ship to Jamestown. From these two germs sprang two powers, one of light and one of darkness, one of order and one of chaos. The continent was not large enough for both. At last they met, they touched; and for them to meet and to touch, was a life and death struggle.—Now at last we can hail Fore Fathers day, with the welcome greeting of final triumph. The Puritan has conquered the Cavalier. The South itself is overrun by Northern emigrants and Northern ideas, as it has been overrun by Northern armies. Ideas of the dignity of labor and of the rights of man are taking the place of the Feudal notions of the right of oppression and of the dignity of idleness. Plymouth Rock is becoming the center, Forefathers day the anniversary, of the whole nation. The Puritan is supreme. And it is the Puritan principles that are to be the cement and the guarantee of our new Union.

All lovers of the woods know, that the Mayflower buds in the autumn. All through the dreary winter, the Mayflower bud lies beneath the snow, like the bud of summer itself; and when it opens, summer itself begins. The Mayflower of the Puritans, in the winter wildness, in the cheerlessness of nature and the darkness of history, was the unopened bud of our whole glad Summer of Liberty, of Civilization and of light. Well may we commemorate its advent, and hold sacred its memory. So long as we cherish the simple virtues of the Puritan, his honesty with God and with man, his earnestness in church and in state, his fearlessness for the right, and his intolerance of the wrong, though we may exercise this intolerance in a wiser way, so long may we call ourselves his children, and bring every year fresh usury for the talent, which he entrusted to us.

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